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The Shape of Things

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THE DECISION OF THE SANCTIONS COMMITTEE of the League to impose an oil embargo on Italy if Mussolini does not agree to discuss peace terms within a week is the type of statesmanship for which the world has been waiting. For weeks it has looked as if Italy would be allowed to obtain the full fruits of its aggression while the United States and the League were engaged in passing the buck. One of the most frequently quoted excuses for America's failure to impose an embargo on the shipment of raw materials to belligerents has been that the League has not held up its share of the burden by imposing effective sanctions. At Geneva, on the other hand, the postponement of oil sanctions has been justified on the ground that no action could be successful as long as the United States refused to cooperate. The President's renewed appeal to American business interests not to profit from war, issued when he signed the new Neutrality Act, showed that the Administration is willing to go much farther than Congress in collective action against war. If the League acts, the burden of responsibility for the continuation of the war will be placed directly at the door of the United States. Some action will then become imperative. Pious appeals to business to forgo profits will no longer have even political significance. The Administration will be forced to exercise some of the same leadership and statesmanship which the British government has shown or go into the election with the stigma of an accomplice in one of the gravest crimes of recent years. After the experiences of 1917 it is difficult to believe that the American people will allow today's war profiteers to determine the national policy.

*

ON THE SAME DAY THAT THE PRESS CARRIED the cheerful news that the stock market had advanced for the eleventh consecutive month, the American Federation of Labor reported that unemployment had increased by 1,229,000 during January, bringing the total to 12,626,000. A seasonal decline in employment is to be expected after the holidays, but this year's drop is the largest in the past five years. The United States Bureau of Labor Statistics had previously indicated a decline of more than 5 per cent from December in the aggregate weekly pay rolls. Industrial production was somewhat less than in the previous month, but the contraction was by no means as great as the drop in employment and pay rolls. At least part of labor's loss appears to be due, as the A. F. of L.

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suggests, to a lengthening of the hours of labor. According to a recent report by the Federal Contract Division of the NRA, approximately two-fifths of the firms engaged on government contracts increased hours and a similar number reduced wages after the invalidation of the NRA. The average work week in industry was lengthened approximately three hours during the last half of 1935. Spurred by profits which in several instances exceed those of 1929, a number of business establishments have announced extensive plans for reconditioning and expanding their plants. As far as the immediate future is concerned, this optimism may be well founded, but the 20's have shown the danger of rapid expansion as long as labor income fails to keep pace with production.

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IN AN EFFORT TO SAVE THE RAILROADS IN spite of themselves, and against the stubborn resistance of some of the Eastern roads, the Interstate Commerce Commission has ordered a reduction of passenger fares to a two-cents-a-mile maximum (three cents in the case of Pullman travel). The ground of the decision was that rates must be lowered if revenues are to increase. In its report the commission points to the steady decline in passenger traffic and revenue from a peak of 47,000,000 passenger miles in 1920 to 16,000,000 in 1933. It points also to the experience of the Western and Southern roads, which, operating respectively on a two-cent and one-and-a-half-cent basis have increased traffic and revenue. There can of course be no complete certainty that rate reduction will have the results intended. The uncalculable elements are the extent to which the reduced rates will lure traffic from the autobuses and privately owned automobiles. Nevertheless, the decision seems to be based on an excellent factual survey made by the commission's examiner, and to proceed by sound economic reasoning from actual experience. Unlike the decisions of the Supreme Court, those of the commission are made on factual economic grounds by men chosen for their expertness in railroad economics. The contention of several of the minority commissioners that through the decision the commission is "invading the field of management" seems beside the point. By its inherent nature railroad regulation must be comprehensive and must involve the making of most of the crucial decisions by the commission. That is the best argument for government operation of railroads.

*

AT PRESENT WRITING THE ELEVATOR STRIKE in New York City is giving a foretaste of the full extent of labor's power. Although the men are only partially organized and were called out gradually, the city wore the aspect of a state of siege and Mayor LaGuardia proclaimed an emergency. The basic issues of the strike were uniform wage scales and recognition of the union. The employers' organization, calling itself the Realty Advisory Board on Labor Relations, has mustered the usual resources of strike-breakers, even stooping so far as to employ Pearl Bergoff's notorious and nauseating services. Still more sinister was the request made of the Bureau of Appointments at Columbia for students as strike-breakers, and happily refused. This is too reminiscent of the use of student vigilantes in breaking strikes on the Pacific Coast to be merely disturbing. No better education in the making of fascists could be imagined. Mayor LaGuardia's action in using the health ordinances to proclaim a state of emergency, and offering to send the operatives of the fire and health departments where it was necessary to maintain the essential services, cannot yet be estimated. It is calculated to forestall a sense of public panic, and thus avert the anti-strike hysteria which that might lead to. It can, however, also be used to break the strike. All depends on the execution of the order.

*

A WEEK AFTER HIS STATEMENT TO POLICE Commissioner Valentine that nine out of ten of New York relief protestants were "outside agitators," Victor F. Ridder, WPA Administrator, urges the formation of "anti-red" unions to counteract "Communist leadership" in the relief organization. Mr. Ridder appeals to the WPA workers who believe "in God, the family, and our government" to organize as peace-loving workers in combating those elements whose "only interest is to pull down the WPA." He would especially like to see the members of the American Legion and the Catholic and Methodist churches in this new union movement. What the Baptists and Presbyterians will say to this we do not know, but the position of the American Legion has on more than one occasion been made excessively clear. Shortly before Mr. Ridder's announcement, indeed, representatives of the Legion had already organized themselves to stamp out communism in the WPA. Somehow this does not sound quite like union organization; on the other hand, Mr. Ridder's proposal for the New York WPA smacks of a company union. He seems to be employing the time-honored formula of the big-business executive: if you are having trouble with the help, encourage them to form a club and make them think they are helping to run the shop. It should be established once for all that relief workers, like any other employees, have the right to form labor unions of their own choosing, to bargain collectively, and if necessary to protest, picket, and strike. Finally, Mr. Ridder should realize that a worker who wishes to occupy himself in any of these ways may be a church member, a good family man, and a member of the Democratic Party. There is no natural law which identifies union pickets with anti-Christ.

*

CIVIL LIBERTIES ARE BEING FRESHLY ATtacked on several fronts. The Post Office Department is sponsoring the Dobbins bill, which would try the sender of unmailable matter at the point of receipt or deposit instead of merely at the point of mailing, as is done at present. This is a simple device to obtain convictions in the mailing of allegedly obscene or seditious matter. Owing to the temper of the New York courts and to the state of public opinion in this part of the country, convictions are hard to get. It is obvious that they would be

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obtained more readily in, say, the South or the far West. In Massachusetts, following hard on the suppression of "The Children's Hour," Representative Dorgan introduced a bill "prohibiting theatrical productions of low moral standard or employing subversive propaganda." This is an old trick to mix censorship of obscenity—the bill specifically bans "subject matter pertaining to homosexuality, incest, the portrayal of a moral pervert or sex degenerate"—with an attack on freedom of political opinion. Finally, the New Jersey Assembly has been edified by the introduction of three bills of which one declares any child who refuses to salute the flag to be a juvenile delinquent, another compels teachers and school administrators to lead the flag salute at stated intervals, and a third calls it a misdemeanor for any person or society to attempt "to influence any pupil against the salute to the flag."

*

SENATOR GUFFEY HAS INTRODUCED A BILL designed to carry out the ship-subsidy proposals of President Roosevelt as set forth in a special message to Congress on March 4 of last year. At that time the President asked for direct subsidies in place of the present mail contracts, and for restrictive measures to put an end to the swindling of the government unearthed by the Black committee. If one accepts the theory that the shipping interests deserve direct subsidies—that is, cash hand-outs—the Guffey bill is by and large a good one. It represents the inevitable New Deal "compromise" in that it seeks to resolve the deadlocked under-cover fight on shipping legislation that since Congress convened has been going on between Senator Copeland and the Department of Commerce on the one hand and Senator Black and the Post Office Department on the other. But it leans a good deal farther toward the position of Senator Black than it does toward that of Copeland and Secretary Roper. The bill would limit profits of subsidized lines to 10 per cent, with half of any profits above that amount "recaptured" by the government (Black asked a straight 6 per cent limitation with full recapture of additional profits); it would limit the profits of shipbuilders to 10 per cent on each vessel whose construction the government has subsidized; and would limit the salaries of officials of subsidized lines to $25,000. For shipbuilding the subsidies are an outright gift of one-third the cost of the vessel and a loan of one-third; for operation they are an outright gift to balance the vague differential between foreign and domestic operating costs. The worst feature of the bill is that the mail contracts would not be canceled until the end of this year, and the contractors would have the right to sue the government in the Court of Claims if their new subsidies did not please them.

*

HAVING TOLD THE WORLD'S BEST SKIERS AND skaters that there was no anti-Semitism at Garmisch-Partenkirchen during the Winter Olympics, the Third Reich is now pressing its cultural campaign elsewhere. No greater insult could have been administered to the "non-Aryans" who make up by far the largest and most devoted section of the audiences of the New York Philharmonic-Symphony Society concerts than the appointment of Wilhelm Furtwängler, cultural ambassador of Hitler, as conductor. The fact that the new conductor succeeds Arturo Toscanini, who denounced the fascist dictatorship in Italy some years ago and has since then indicated his opinion of the Jewish persecutions by agreeing to conduct the Palestine Symphony Orchestra at Tel-Aviv, makes the contrast all the sharper. Mr. Furtwängler, unlike his fellow-conductors of similar rank, including Bruno Walter, has not only found it possible to live and work in Nazi Germany, aside from a brief eclipse when he defended the works of Hindemith; when he lifts the baton at Carnegie Hall he will bear also the official title of director-general and chief conductor of the Berlin State Operas and of the Berlin Philharmonic. The other outstanding Nazi project is a fete at Heidelberg University to celebrate the 550th anniversary of that ancient institution. The date set, June 30, coincides with another historic date in Nazi culture, the purge of June 30, 1934. Columbia University, Vassar, Harvard, and Cornell have shown the bad taste of accepting the invitation to send representatives. The British universities, on the other hand, have refused with such unanimity that the rector of Heidelberg has now withdrawn the invitations sent to Great Britain. Add Nazi cultural notes: The population of the German concentration camps, according to a recent estimate, is now 119,000.

*

AS LATE AS 1934 FOOD PACKAGES WERE BEING mailed into the Soviet Union. Now the Russians take pride in the fact that they are sending parcels to foreign countries. This applies especially to private shipments of butter and fats from various cities of the U.S.S.R. and from the German Volga district to the German Reich. Such shipments have increased appreciably in the last few months. The Soviet authorities allow them since the supply of these commodities is plentiful and continually rising. Moreover, it is the best kind of anti-fascist propaganda. When Soviet citizens were pulling in their belts in 1931, 1932, and 1933, they knew they were doing it to build basic industries which would soon bear fruit in the shape of the "good life"; the "good life" has now arrived. But the Germans are being asked to forgo necessities in order to produce cannons and submarines and military aeroplanes, which mean not prosperity but war.

*

THE CONVENTION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF Superintendence of the National Education Association, held in St. Louis during the last week of February, was a historic educational meeting. From the curtain-raising session of the John Dewey Society for the Study of Education and Culture, which preceded the convention proper, through to the end there was refreshing eagerness to face realities and to act on them. Invasions of academic freedom were condemned in unmistakable language. The executive committee indorsed the Sisson bill to repeal the ridiculous ban against the teaching of communism in the schools of Washington, D. C. The convention denounced

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political rule in education following a thorough airing of what amounted to the dismissal by Governor Curley of Dr. Payson Smith from the post of Commissioner of Education in Massachusetts. It applauded Norman Thomas when he completely outdid Senator Barkley of Kentucky and former Governor Henry J. Allen of Kansas in a three-cornered debate on current national issues from the standpoints of their respective parties. Charles A. Beard, between sessions, took time to send a telegram to Governor Alf M. Landon to ask if he was "proud to be sponsored by William Randolph Hearst." Dr. George S. Counts of Columbia University bracketed Hearst, former American Legion Commander Belgrano, Father Coughlin, Alfred E. Smith, the American Liberty League, and the D.A.R. as the leading subversive forces in the United States. All in all, it was a meeting which indicates that school teachers will not take fascism lying down.

Three Years of Roosevelt

THE Roosevelt wheel has now come three-quarters turn. If political campaigns were ever genuinely fought on the record instead of through slogans and distortion, this would be a good time for scanning the ledger of the national achievement and striking a trial balance.

Looking backward over the three years we are struck again by the amazing capacity of the President to be several people at once. We know that he is master of the technique of the split personality—a technique always invaluable in the repertory of a politician, and especially so at a time when class differences are too acute to be glossed over but not so sharp that the political struggle can be frankly fought in terms of them. Much of the present confusion is best explained in terms of the successive unfolding of Mr. Roosevelt's policies. The history of the New Deal falls into six discernible although overlapping stages —and added all together they make a rather meager total.

The first stage was marked by the appearance of the "man of action" in a great emergency. In the banking crisis Mr. Roosevelt was able to transform the country's hysteria from actionless panic into a hysterical emphasis on action for action's sake. The second stage gave promise of a sustained policy and a new administrative structure, both of which, somewhat prematurely, came to be called the New Deal. Ideas seemed to pour into Washington on every incoming train, and from every idea—as from the teeth that Cadmus once sowed—there sprang up a full-grown administrative agency. Zeal and pep abounded, and phrases reminiscent at once of a holy crusade and a high-pressure salesmanship campaign shot like lightning through the sky. The next stage saw the crack-up of this entire emotional and administrative structure. The class interests which had banded themselves together into partnership for the public interest now dissolved again in a struggle for supremacy in which the business groups won out with a terrifying certainty. The best administrators found themselves baffled as to what they were meant to do and blocked whenever they sought to do it. Given this collapse, the fourth stage in Mr. Roosevelt's tenure of office was his heroic attempt to substitute his own political adroitness for a program that no longer existed. The country was treated to the somewhat indecent spectacle of a seductive figure who was using all the lightning shifts of his personality to conceal the fact that he had no sustained plan. The fifth stage was the constitutional fiasco—the coup de grâce administered to Mr. Roosevelt's immediate efforts in the name of the eternal legalities. Now finally we are in the sixth stage—that of the New Deal in the midst of a campaign, when "practical politics" dictates that every surviving principle be subordinated to the struggle for votes.

What of the actual record of accomplishment? In the most important area, that of industrial control, the record is far from a heartening one. The most vigorous approach has been in the field of public utilities. The Wheeler-Rayburn Holding Company Act stands out as a measure the President has fought for with the sustained power of a great leader. The achievement in the Tennessee Valley and in the construction or projected construction of other dams is a considerable one. But the corporate profits which furnish the drive toward the creation of holding companies continue undiminished at a pre-depression level. In the control of the stock market we are plagued by half-hearted measures, the result of which may only be to intensify the fabricated boom and leave investors lapped in a false belief that the government, like some sedulous god, is really watching over them. In agriculture, the Administration has done something a little short of its best to repair the fences torn up by the Supreme Court cyclone. In manufacturing, the unlamented NRA with its cartelization has been replaced by nothing except the Guffey Coal Act. The Administration's tax policy, as we have often pointed out, has been on the whole regressive rather than progressive. The housing and public-works programs have been in a sense the most tragic failures of all, since in both cases precious and unparalleled opportunities were lost for meeting the depression in a socially constructive way. To labor itself the Administration has under pressure given an equivocal support, which in some cases degenerated into the run-around; in the diminished form of the Wagner-Connery act this policy is still hanging constitutional fire. The administration of relief and the social-security program have at least the merit of a recognition of two basic duties on the part of the government. But in execution the story has been different. Relief amounts have been cut to a minimum, and relief policy has been treacherous in its vacillations. And in its scope, its tax provisions, and the amount of its benefit payments the security program is woefully inadequate.

This is not a perfectionist appraisal. No one expected the Roosevelt Administration to strike twelve all at once. But the distressing thing is that this record of fragmentary achievement is not restricted to the area of industrial control. In his evasion of the clear issue of the power of the Supreme Court and his abandonment of the chance to achieve a vigorous peace policy, the President has traced the same pattern. That pattern is emerging ever more

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clearly. The President generally gets off to a brave and vigorous start, with the impulsiveness of a man who has a genius for making starts and who acts on every fresh accession of energy. He continues with a series of dramatic and Promethean confrontings—chiefly oral—of the massed forces of reaction. But he seems to have no stamina for the long continuity or the sustained attack. Eventually, under the pressure of business and political interests, bureaucratic rivalries, and sheer fatigue, he gives way with a "compromise" that scraps most of what was intended.

So often has this pattern been repeated that we must ask ourselves what there is in Mr. Roosevelt's life and personality that dictates it. He is, first of all, a patrician squire torn from his Dutchess County estate to wrestle with the problems of an urban industrial economy in collapse. Intrinsically he has no taste for such problems and little grasp of them. He has undoubtedly a better mastery of practical politics than anyone else on the Democratic or Republican horizon. But he has been visited by the drastic fate of having to spend his entire term of office in the shadow of capitalist crisis. And he seems to have learned relatively little from his experience.

Under other conditions Mr. Roosevelt might have been a great and not merely an astute President. But given our present economic agony his shortcomings stand out. To say he is better than any Republican candidate now on the horizon is not to say very much. If, as Mr. Farley predicts, it is likely to be a dirty campaign, then it will be dirty without being exciting. There is a real decay of political faith noticeable in both parties, very much like the decay of religious authority that Marx noted in Europe during the Crimean War. We have the curious spectacle of a country grown tired of Mr. Roosevelt but too well taught by six years of depression to place much stock in even the most expert build-up of the new Republican Presidential striplings. There can be no doubt that the twilight of the two old parties has set in. And there can be no doubt also that the economic situation is shaping eventually toward a new party alignment in which a labor party will be a genuine force. It is toward such an event that our efforts must be directed.

Japanese Fascism Misses Fire

THE dramatic reappearance of Premier Okada three days after his reported assassination symbolizes the almost complete failure of Tokyo's military revolt. While it is still too early to estimate with any certainty the effect of the uprising on Japanese foreign and domestic policy, the indications are that it will be relatively small. That the young reactionaries should flounder with success almost in their grasp is highly significant. A year or two ago everyone was convinced that the military clique could stage a successful coup d'état whenever it pleased. From almost every angle the situation seemed ripe for a fascist dictatorship. There was widespread discontent with the civilian government, chiefly because of its failure to cope with the agricultural crisis. The middle-class business groups were suffering under the heel of the big trusts and combines. Salaried employees in both business and government had experienced drastic reductions in income. Despite the industrial boom following the Manchurian adventure, working-class living standards remained considerably below the pre-depression level. Corruption had seeped into every sector of political life. As in the Italy of 1922 and the Germany of 1933, the youth of the country found the doors of opportunity closed. Led by the young officers of the army—who were mostly of middle-class or farm origin—a powerful movement had developed which demanded a "strong hand in control" of governmental policies and a purification of the Japanese state from liberal or Western influence.

Although the roots of Japan's military-fascist movement are primarily domestic, its activity has been greatest in the sphere of foreign policy. As in other countries, the fascist leaders have been unscrupulous in their exploitation of patriotic sentiment and have repeatedly instigated war scares in order to bolster their prestige. The Mukden incident of September 18, 1931, which precipitated the Japanese invasion of China, was planned by a small group of military leaders for the apparent purpose of creating a domestic crisis that would permit the army to dictate governmental policy. The Japanese people have been kept in a state bordering on hysteria by the military's constant stress on a coming national crisis—which presumably meant a war with the United States, the Soviet Union, or both. By resorting to the ancient slogan—used in every successful Japanese insurrection since the dawn of time—of "restoring the power of the Emperor," the fascist groups have been able to obtain the support of the influential feudalist remnants who have never wholly accepted constitutional government.

Yet despite their great strength the military-fascist clique had never before made an open bid for power. Their failure to do so was partially due to a feeling that they were not ready for the responsibilities of office, and partially to the fact that their wrath had been cooled by the concessions granted by the Saito and Okada governments. At the suggestion of Prince Saionji, the last of the Elder Statesmen, both of these governments had been carefully chosen to represent a balance of power between the military and civilian elements. By common consent the military had been given virtually a free hand in foreign affairs, and the budgets for the defense forces, while trimmed slightly, had gone through practically unchallenged. In domestic affairs, on the other hand, the army has had comparatively little to say. The agricultural crisis has remained unsolved, and the position of the lower middle class has shown little improvement. This meant that fascism must either move forward to power or lose its hold on the masses.

It is difficult from this distance to learn why the revolt collapsed so ignominiously. The election returns indicate rather clearly, however, that public sympathy for the extremists has dwindled in recent months. The government has been aided by a slight improvement in general economic conditions. The military adventure on the

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Asiatic continent no longer inspires the same enthusiasm as existed three and four years ago. And above all, the various military, patriotic, and reactionary societies, despite agreement in policy, have been unable to form a united movement. The Tokyo insurgents do not appear to have had active support from any of the hundreds of organizations whose sympathies lay in the same direction.

Success of the revolt would undoubtedly have caused Japan to become even more intransigent in foreign policy. One can almost take it for granted that it would have been followed by a more aggressive policy in North China and Mongolia, culminating in an attack on Soviet Siberia. In most countries the failure of an attempted uprising against the government would lead public sentiment to turn against the rebels. If past experience is any criterion, however, this will not be the case in Japan. The series of political assassinations in 1932, which were inspired by considerations similar to those operating in the recent affair, only served to arouse public sympathy for the assassins and to force the government to accept much of the program which they advocated. It is quite possible that the same will be true now, although the crest of fascist popularity seems definitely to have passed. The activity of Prince Saionji in the selection of the new Cabinet suggests the probability of another of his typical compromises, giving the fascists certain concessions but leaving civilian elements in control of at least some of the strategic posts in the government. While it was just such a compromise which laid the basis for Hitler's rise to power in Germany, the disunity in the ranks of Japanese fascists gives reason to hope that the extremists will be checked before they plunge the entire world into chaos.

Toward Negro Unity

IT is heartening to record that about a thousand delegates of all varieties of political opinion attended the National Negro Congress at Chicago and presented a united front against a reactionary world. But it is also relevant, in a period in which formulas for future action are being discussed and decided, to examine in the cold light of the real world inhabited by the Negro masses the exact significance of the unity which the widely divergent groups managed to achieve. If one is to judge by the resolutions it produced, the Negro congress came dangerously close to being an adventure in confusion and loud cheers.

It is incontrovertible that the salvation of the Negro lies along the working-class road. His labor power is his greatest strength; once organized, and integrated with labor's power as a whole, it will eventually win for him that genuine equality which laws and resolutions can only describe. Any movement, therefore, undertaken in the name of Negro welfare must be judged in the light of this general principle. The fact that the Communist Party promoted, supported, and at least tried to direct the proceedings of the Chicago congress would imply the recognition of this primary premise. Yet the text of the resolutions, particularly in two cases, indicates either that the party influence was unavailing or that the united front has been stretched so far that it no longer snaps back to its working-class base.

In Chicago A. Philip Randolph of the Sleeping Car Porters delivered, by proxy since he himself was ill, a strong appeal for industrial unionism. This might well have been the theme of the entire congress. Instead, it was one note among many ranging from whole-hearted indorsement of the Negro churches to support of trade unionism—just as its delegates ranged from "high church dignitaries" to plain workers.

The Congress passed some excellent resolutions. It indorsed trade unionism and the struggle of the share-croppers; it declared itself against lynching, Jim Crowism, exploitation of women, and war and fascism; it resolved to defend civil liberties, to protect the interests of youth, and to fight for old-age pensions. At the same time, however, it passed two resolutions which can only add to the general confusion already existing among Negroes and may even offset the effect of its other pronouncements.

It is notorious that one of the bulwarks of white supremacy in the South is the Negro church manned by "Uncle Tom" ministers. But here is the resolution of the congress in regard to the church:

> We still feel that the Negro church is the most potent agency to be used in the further progress and advancement of our people. We therefore recommend that the Negro shall continue to hold faith and confidence in God and the church. . . . The power of the gospel is supremely needed in a time like this.

As for Negro business, which exerts a highly reactionary influence in Negro life, in strictly Negro questions as well as in relation to the white world, the congress resolution runs as follows:

> Whereas the development of sound and thriving Negro business is *most indispensable to the general elevation of the Negro's social and economic security* [italics ours], therefore be it resolved that all Negroes consider it their inescapable duty to support Negro business.

The resolution ended with a plea to Negro business to employ only union labor; in view of the small units of which Negro business is composed, this turns out to be a pious wish.

The left supporters of the congress maintain that the Negro masses must be reached. We agree and we should be the last to deny that the rank-and-file Negro can be reached only in terms of his own tradition and background. For that very reason the indorsement of the Negro church and Negro business is, to say the least, unfortunate. In that average representative of the Negro masses to whose welfare the congress was presumably addressed, the admonition "Fight war and fascism" may arouse a salutary but generalized emotion. "Support the church and Negro business" on the other hand carries a specific, immediate force. It will certainly be used by the "high church dignitaries" to bind the Negro worker more firmly to the most reactionary institutions in his heritage, and tend to cut him off even more completely from his natural allies—the working class.

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WASHINGTON WEEKLY

BY PAUL W. WARD

Washington, March 1

THE New Deal's Forgotten Woman has just edged herself into a seat at the table where Administration leaders are playing madly at the game of election-year politics. Madam Secretary has practically put out of business the major agency set up under the New Deal to safeguard the consumers' interest.

Madam Secretary

It was called the Consumers' Division, Department of Labor, when Miss Perkins first got her hands upon it a few weeks ago. Now it is the "Consumers' Project" and has some sort of indefinite status under the WPA. Its journal, the *Consumer,* has been suppressed—"suspended" is the official term—and its single weapon, publicity, has been further dulled by having its press officer forbidden henceforth to issue statements describing the results of its researches.

In addition, publication of the price studies ordered two years ago by President Roosevelt and conducted by Dr. Walton Hale Hamilton and a staff under the guidance of an interdepartmental committee have also been "suspended," although the committee a few months ago voted to have them printed forthwith. That vote was taken before the price studies were transferred to the Consumers' Division and before the division was put under Miss Perkins's twitchy thumb. Dr. Hamilton's preface to the studies, sent to the printers in the interim, has turned up mysteriously in the Secretary's office, where it has undergone heavy censorship by one of her aides to remove what the aide calls "politically injurious" phrases and passages.

Among the things found objectionable by the censor was a reference by Dr. Hamilton to the fact that the men employed under the NRA to safeguard the consumers' interest in the formulation of codes were, perforce, "amateurs" in comparison with the industrialists opposite them when it came to dealing with the intricacies of manufacturing and merchandising in fact rather than theory. The censor suggested that for this reference to "amateurs" there be substituted a reference to "experts" retained by the NRA. He also deleted a critical reference to the Supreme Court.

These and the other happenings noted have been brought about in the few weeks since Dr. Hamilton left the division to become director of the Social Security Board's bureau of research and statistics. His successor as director of the consumers' agency, Clarence Ayres, a Texas economist, is new to Washington and the ways of the New Deal. He has the will to fight but has not yet made up his mind to do so. He still thinks more can be accomplished through "cooperation." He has yet to learn that in Washington he who "cooperates" instead of fighting soon finds himself out on the street for all practical purposes. That's where Fannie herself is now—for all practical purposes.

She too is a "cooperator," but one without a will to fight. What she has done to the Consumers' Division she has done out of fear that the division might get her into a fight. She has done it also out of a desperate anxiety to avoid having under her wing any agency that might say or do something embarrassing to the Administration's current efforts to woo its way back into the favor of the rich tradesmen whose dough is badly needed to help finance the 1936 campaign. She may have been motivated, too, by Hearst's broadsides against the Consumers' Division and its works. Benjamin de Casseres, who wrote those broadsides, made a nasty crack in one of them about Fanny's expertness in the matter of hats and how to talk through them. She had the piece on her desk recently while evisceration of the Consumers' Division was getting under way.

ONE can overlook most of the smearing done at the WPA's expense by politicians, whether they be Democrats like Senator Holt or Republicans like Senator Hastings. But one cannot escape a feeling of nausea when the WPA smears itself as it has just done. It has allowed itself to be caught in the role of sweatshopper's "angel," financing erection in the state of Mississippi of a series of textile and garment factories disguised as "vocational-training schools" but designed by the local communities for private occupancy and use. The buildings represent an investment of WPA funds ranging from $22,000 to $45,000 per plant. There are at least four, probably six, and possibly more of these projects. The local communities have been contributing only a few thousand dollars to their cost and meanwhile entering into contracts with union-labor-dodging mills in the North to operate the "schools" as productive enterprises rent free. In one town, Philadelphia, arrangements had been made to sell the "school," a $65,000 property, to a knitting concern for $20,000.

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Finding Hopkins's lieutenants acquainted with the situation but unwilling to promise corrective action, John Edelman, research director for the American Federation of Hosiery Workers, threatened to make the facts public. The threats reached Hopkins's ears, and with them the facts, and Hopkins promptly ordered work stopped on four projects. His aides then indulged themselves in a painful effort to convince inquirers that they had known nothing of the Mississippi situation until Edelman brought them the facts. A little research in newspaper files makes fluff of their protestations. It shows that the true nature of the projects had been amply and proudly publicized in the press of Mississippi and that some of these dispatches had reached at least the trade papers in New York weeks ago. The New York *Journal of Commerce,* for example, carried a February 10 dispatch from Ellisville, Mississippi, telling of the "vocational-school" project there and quoting local authorities on the private use to which the project would be put.

Maverick of Texas

Furthermore, according to Edelman, the state WPA director, Wayne Alliston, a Hopkins appointee, confessed familiarity with the true nature of the projects but asserted he had learned it only after he had approved them. There has been no explanation from Mr. Alliston or anybody else in authority as to why the projects were not submitted to the state Board of Education for approval, as Mississippi law requires on school-construction work.

Edelman's researches also unearthed evidence that in order to provide "adequate female labor" for a garment plant newly moved to Columbus, Mississippi, the local authorities prevailed upon Oklahoma authorities to parole a hundred inmates of the state reformatory for women and ship them to Columbus. Contracts provided that the garment plant could deduct from the women's weekly wages sums to cover the expense of transporting them and to reimburse their employers for the plant investment.

MAURY MAVERICK'S ebullient, slapstick humors have proved detrimental to a project on which he has his heart set. The Texas Congressman wants to take away the ROTC's sex appeal, but his colleagues on the House Military Affairs Committee refuse to believe he is serious. As a result, if the bill he has introduced to achieve his objective is ever to obtain a hearing in committee, it will be only when and if a few hundred persons who see eye to eye with Maury have written commanding letters to their Congressmen.

Working on the theory that if we must train our children for killing other people's children we ought to prepare them to face the realities of international butchery, Maverick has drafted a bill to eliminate "sex appeal and false glory, the emotional by-products of militarism, from military training." It would ban the use of girls as "sponsors" or honorary officers of cadet corps and prohibit their participation in drills or military ceremonies of any kind under the ROTC. In a corollary measure Maverick proposes to make seven books required reading in the ROTC. The books are Zweig's "The Case of Sergeant Grischa," Dos Passos's "Three Soldiers," Crane's "The Red Badge of Courage," Millis's "The Road to War" and "The Martial Spirit," Remarque's "All Quiet on the Western Front," and Stallings's "The First World War."

BRIEFER MENTION. Camel's nose out: George Creel has announced severance of his official relation with the WPA as chairman of its "advisory" committee, a non-salaried post held since last August, the purpose of which was to help the WPA sell itself to the public in an election year without changing its brand. . . . Camel's nose in: Donald Richberg, publicly denounced by John Lewis *et al.* during the NRA for his anti-labor shenanigans, is worming his way back into the councils of his old clients, the railroad brotherhoods, with the help of a small clique of their leaders, who like the Bourbons never learn. He has been given a trial assignment, drafting an extension of the railway act's Section 7-b further to guard against road consolidations at the expense of labor. . . . Unforeseen result of Guffey Coal Act: the consumer for the first time is to have a voice in fixing rail freight rates. The Guffey board and its consumers' counsel, Thomas M. Woodward (too honest to keep his Shipping Board job), have intervened in pending ICC hearings on the continuance of emergency freight surcharges on soft coal, which is partly responsible for the fact that miners get less than carriers do out of the consumers' coal dollar. Heretofore these rate hearings have been merely private litigation between roads and producers, with the interlocking financial interests of litigants blocking the real fight to lower rates and leaving the battle merely one over regional differentials. Woodward calls the resulting rates an "economic absurdity.". . . In eight weeks of desultory work Congress has handled only three major pieces of legislation, passing two—the bonus and the farm bill—and dodging the third, permanent neutrality legislation. In the remaining weeks of the session it faces only four other measures of comparable importance—relief, taxes, housing, and ship subsidies. The stage is set for sloppy, anti-social handling of all four in the rush to go home and rebuild political fences. . . . The last chance of the Supreme Court's prodding Congress to constructive legislative action passes with the TVA decision, and Justice McReynolds, already recognized as the most repugnant personality on the bench, emerges as the most admirable, too. . . . The Brain Trust triumphs at last: the Appellate Court's decision in the Buzzards Roost-PWA power-loan case was a victory for Jerome Frank, "purged" from the AAA last year, over Newton D. Baker, batting for the widows and orphans who own the power trust.

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Not Now, Maybe Later

CHAOS AND COWARDICE IN WASHINGTON

BY MAURY MAVERICK

NOT now. Maybe later. That seems to be the general idea around Washington. People should be told the truth about the constitutional issue. We ought to stay out of war. Something should be done about relief. Civil liberties must be defended. But not now. This is an election year. After the election, maybe. But not now.

Washington has been completely paralyzed by the fear of doing anything that might lose votes. It has become intellectually and spiritually aimless. Neither the Administration nor its opponents have any program whatever. Not even the Progressives show much sign of life. The American people are considered a set of prize boobs who are too ignorant to be told anything. And the nation's leaders turn to shadow-boxing or simply shirk their duty, fleeing ghosts that don't exist.

The neutrality fight is the most dismal instance of this legislative paralysis. Senators Borah and Johnson, as usual, are for nothing and against everything. Senator Pittman blandly proclaims a one-man war against Japan. John Bassett Moore, three-score-and-tenner, rises from the grave claiming to know everything, offers half a dozen authorities—all being himself—to prove himself right, and rants at any collective action for peace or even any single action for peace. He asks that we do nothing except repeat the errors we made in the World War. And he does all this in a rigmarole of scholastic and cabalistic terminology which would drive any sensible person to distraction. A few leaders of Italian-Americans, speaking darkly of "five million votes"—which don't exist—denounce neutrality. Oil and steel and cotton and shipping groups put the screws on Senators and Representatives and the Administration. The President backs out. The State Department, after weeks of testimony, tapers off into nothingness. And thus we have the stalemate of the neutrality legislation—easily the most dishonest betrayal, spiritually and intellectually, that the Administration and the State Department and Congress have thus far combined to effect. And those who should be leaders and who should know better go running away like a pack of scrub coyotes.

It is hard not to feel hopeless about the whole national political situation. Large numbers of bills curtailing civil liberties and otherwise blocking progress are being seriously considered, while some very good bills suggesting constitutional amendments receive no consideration. The American mind, reeling from an on-again, off-again, Democrat-Republican bombardment, is so punch drunk that it can no longer think about any real problems. No "movement" or philosophy seems to offer relief. Oh, yes. They do talk a good deal about a third-party movement. I remember a friend who said to me, "Why have a third party when you haven't even got the first two?"

In such a time of confusion it may be worth while to get down to a few simple facts and to draw from them a few simple conclusions. Whether my conclusions form even the basis for a program, I do not know. But until such times as the broken parts of our national economy can be pieced together they contain at least some principles that seem to me essential. I want to list four of them.

First, civil liberties must be preserved and any effort to curtail them must be desperately fought by every group that wants to maintain even the appearance of democratic government.

The sniping at freedom of speech and freedom of the press is now greater than in any previous peace-time period in our history. We have before us in Congress the McCormack military-disaffection bill—Senator Tydings has now disavowed it—which includes search-and-seizure provisions and gives you a nice two-year rest in the federal penitentiary for "disaffecting" the soldiers. Then we have the Kramer sedition bill, offering you a five-year rest at the same penitentiary for what might be considered sedition. These bills and others like them represent the worst hysteria of the times. All this is accompanied by a sickening bilge about "communism," which flows from the desperate desire of holding to the status quo. The spearhead of the movement for the suppression of civil liberties is furnished by the "patriotic" societies, the United States Chamber of Commerce, the United States navy—the War Department seems for the time to have withdrawn from this activity—and the heavy industries operating in steel and war materials.

Second, the Constitution is a document written by human beings, and the Supreme Court is a body composed of human beings.

Many Americans have a hazy idea that the Supreme Court is a sort of Ark of the Covenant—a repository of divine wisdom. The first essential is that we should recognize that the Constitution was written by human beings and Americans, and that the Supreme Court is also composed of nine human beings. Next we must understand that nowhere in the Constitution is the court expressly given the power to declare acts of Congress unconstitutional. And despite this the court goes on denying powers to Congress because they are not to be found expressly granted in the Constitution. Thus the unwritten right of the Supreme Court to exercise judicial review is used to blot out the unwritten implications of the written right of Congress to provide for the general welfare. We must, moreover, recognize that all this talk about written and

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unwritten constitutions obscures the basic issue. The English constitution is unwritten, yet that has not removed the difficulties that block the path of constitutional change. But when there has been a unified demand from the English people, backed by leadership in the House of Commons, that change has always taken place. The same thing can be done in the United States. The Constitution *as written* should not stand in the way of proper social and economic legislation. If it does, the massed pressure of the people must bring about its change.

Third, we must conserve our natural resources, using public ownership when that is necessary and practical to effect this purpose.

Unless we conserve the natural resources of the country we shall have nothing left to conserve. The country will be so washed away and blown away that the soil will not be able to support the population. And how can we achieve conservation? One of the best ways is shown by the TVA. It has a program for preventing soil erosion, for reforestation, for flood control, and for the generation and sale of cheap power. It embodies a recognition of the fact that the fight for conservation must be carried on not only against the natural enemies of flood and wind but against such man-made enemies as the private ownership of public resources. Surely we have as much right to own our resources as we have to own and operate the Post Office, the Panama Canal, roads, and bridges.

Fourth, we must stay out of war, even at great temporary sacrifice, and we must observe strict neutrality.

The world has not learned from the last war. All the promising efforts toward collective action for peace have been defeated, and the world is back where it started—except that it is in a worse condition than before. Now, when 90 per cent of the American people favor neutrality and peace and are willing to make many sacrifices to stay out of war, the same "leaders" who brought us into the last war are getting ready to bring us into the next. Senators who have blocked every effort at peace still want political isolation. But they are anxious for economic participation in world affairs. The two combined mean a dangerous treading of the road to war. Professors, not personally evil, are none the less writing about "freedom of the seas" and "the rights of neutrality," with vicious consequences. The Administration has run a disgusting shell game of international legalities and cheap precinct politics. As a result of all this America is left with no policies of any kind on neutrality.

I may be accused of talking like a prophet of despair, but it seems to me that the country is existing on wishful thinking. We know that there are at least 11,000,000 unemployed. We know that civil liberties must be maintained. We know that the members of the Supreme Court are subject to human frailties like everyone else. We know that we must conserve our national resources, and that we must adopt a definite and stringent neutrality policy. Yet we do something else. Not now, we are told. Maybe later. I can only say that if we cannot recognize the need for attacking these perfectly obvious national problems, we might just as well pack our government up, put it in cold storage, and let the country go to pieces.

Beware of Inflation!

BY MAXWELL S. STEWART

TALK of inflation is once more in the air. The passage of the bonus, the threatened enactment of the Frazier-Lemke farm-mortgage bill, and renewed agitation for a direct issuance of currency to cover emergency appropriations have sent chills of fear up the spines of conservatives, comparable only to the fright engendered by the alleged threat to the Constitution. Among the specific factors usually cited by those who foresee the country's ruin unless the Administration returns to orthodox financing are the probability that governmental expenditures for 1936-37 will greatly exceed those of any other peace-time year in American history, and the prospect of another budget deficit of more than three billion dollars. Such governmental generosity, critics of the Administration rightly maintain, cannot continue without a day of reckoning.

That a certain amount of inflation has already occurred cannot be denied. Any rapid and prolonged increase in prices—assuming that there has been no breakdown in production—may be considered a definite sign of inflation, regardless of the euphemisms applied to it. Such a rise in prices indicates that the volume of effective purchasing medium, as represented by money and credit, has increased more rapidly than the supply of available goods. Unquestionably this has been true in the past three years, when wholesale commodity prices have advanced by one-third and the cost of living by 18 per cent. In terms of commodities the dollar of today has a purchasing power of only seventy-five cents as compared with that of January, 1933.

What disturbs most economists, however, is not the increase in prices which has already taken place. They will admit that a certain readjustment was normal and healthy after four years of continuous deflation. But they ask whether this process can be checked before it turns into a runaway inflation of the type experienced by Germany and Russia after the World War.

Discussion of this danger usually turns on the possibility that large amounts of fiat money may be issued to cover the increasing governmental deficits. Some ten billion dollars in the gold reserve presents a temptation difficult to resist. Yet despite the activity of currency fanatics

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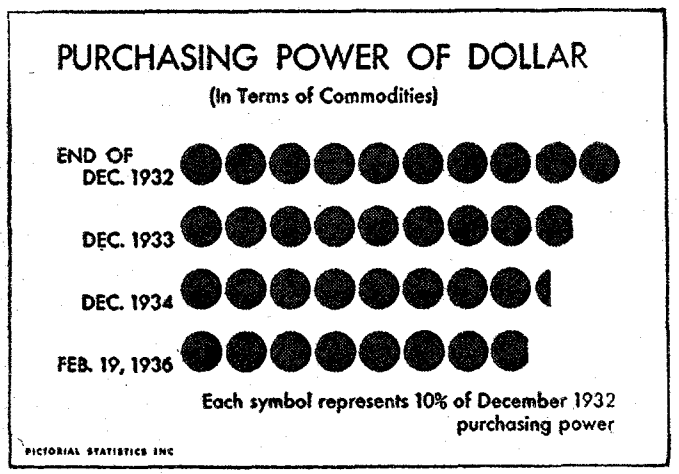
in Congress, there seems little real danger of a printing-press inflation. Even the most harebrained of the inflationists recognize the undesirability of unlimited currency expansion, and there appear to be enough orthodox-minded Congressmen to prevent the enactment of a crude inflationary measure. As long as the government is able



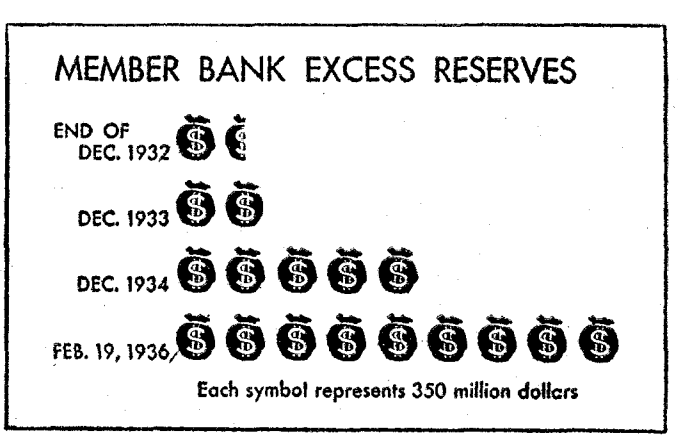
to sell its short-term bills at less than 1 per cent interest, the urge to start the presses should be easily held within bounds.

If the danger of an unbridled inflation exists, as it doubtless does, it is in a wholly different quarter. Neither the bonus nor the huge governmental expenditures for relief are likely to have much effect on the situation. It is generally admitted that the United States could, if necessary, support a federal debt double the size of the present debt. In terms of relative national wealth both the British and the Italian debt burdens are more than twice as heavy as that of the United States. The fact that Treasury bonds are selling at close to their all-time peak indicates that the government's credit is as strong as at any period in American history. And why not? Despite huge deficits the Treasury has accumulated approximately 45 per cent of the world's supply of monetary gold, together with some two billion dollars' worth of silver. Despite inflationary rumors, the dollar has consistently remained above par—except for a brief and unimportant lapse in the last few weeks. It is doubtful whether foreign pressure on the dollar could reduce our huge gold hoard to manageable size, much less cause a serious threat to our monetary stability. With exports running consistently above imports, the probabilities are in favor of further additions to our unwieldy monetary reserves.

This seeming impregnability merely conceals what is undoubtedly a serious weakness. While there is little danger of currency inflation, there is a real threat of an uncontrolled expansion of credit, which would be equally disastrous. Only 5 to 10 per cent of American business transactions involve an exchange of cash; the remainder are financed by some form of credit, chiefly through the medium of checking accounts. The boom of 1928-29 was essentially a credit inflation, and was finally terminated by a contraction of credit initiated by the Federal Reserve authorities.

No one would suggest that the present situation is exactly parallel to that of 1929. The danger is latent rather than immediate. Nevertheless, the banks' excess reserves of more than three billion dollars on deposit with the Federal Reserve are more disquieting than the Treasury deficit. Excess reserves of member banks are not, it must be noted, under the direct control of the Federal Reserve authorities. For the most part they represent deposits of wealthy individuals or business establishments which are being held for subsequent investment. During the depression profitable business opportunities have been few, and men of wealth have not unnaturally refrained from investment until new openings should appear. The commercial banks, having no need for large currency holdings, have deposited these surplus funds with the Federal Reserve banks, where they have accumulated in excess of legal requirements. This excess is not only subject to withdrawal on demand, but may—at the discretion of the banks—be made the basis for an expansion of credit of at least ten times its amount. Thus if business conditions continue to improve, the banks could, by ordinary loans, increase the volume of effective purchasing power by more than thirty billion dollars without the issuance of a single greenback. Since present-day bank deposits and currency total approximately fifty billion, this would represent an increase of approximately 60 per cent in the existing medium of payment—enough to make the boom of 1929 look like a piker's affair. If greenbacks were issued to pay the bonus, or for any other purpose, this additional currency would likewise flow back to the banks and become the basis of a potential expansion of credit ten times as large as the issue. With a continued rise in business activity, aided by government expenditures, there is every reason to expect that these reserves will be used.

The gravity of this menace becomes apparent when one recalls that prior to the depression excess reserves of $100,000,000 were considered abnormally high. In 1930 the Federal Reserve authorities began to buy government



securities in the open market for the purpose of easing credit. By the beginning of 1934, when the United States altered the gold value of the dollar, the Federal Reserve banks had paid out approximately $2,400,000,000 in purchase of such securities. Most of this money was used by the hard-pressed banks to pay off existing indebtedness or to meet the public demand for cash for hoarding purposes, but $800,000,000 which was not so needed was deposited with the Federal Reserve banks over and

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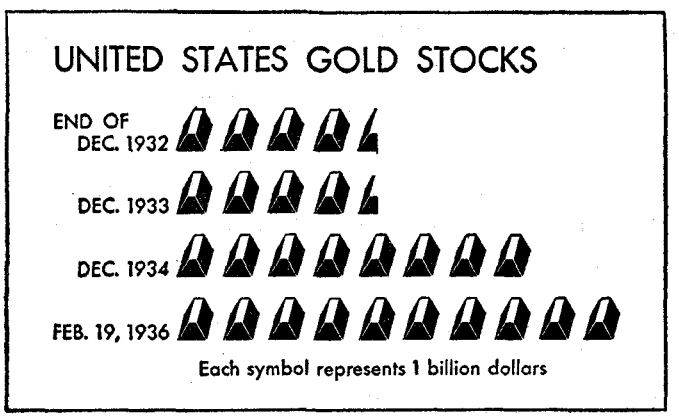
above reserve requirements. Although this brought excess reserves to an unprecedented height, no anxiety was felt since they could be absorbed at any moment by the sale of the Federal Reserve's newly acquired securities.

Revaluation of the dollar changed this picture fundamentally. In the first place, it presented the Treasury with a profit of $2,800,000,000 on its existing gold stocks, which, if spent, would be added to the reserves. Approximately $800,000,000 of this has been disposed of in such a way as to have only a slight effect on reserves, but the remaining $2,000,000,000, at present assigned to the exchange-equalization fund, hangs over the American economy like a sword of Damocles. Secondly, the undervaluation of the dollar has led to a marked increase in the country's gold stocks, which in turn has swelled excess reserves. In 1934 approximately $1,400,000,000 was added to the nation's gold supply, and in 1935 an



additional $1,900,000,000 was accumulated. When the price of gold was raised from $20.67 to $35 an ounce the producers and holders of gold were in effect subsidized to the extent of nearly $15 an ounce. Domestic hoarders were penalized by not being permitted to cash in on this profit, but gold miners and foreign speculators were able to take full advantage of the change, which inevitably increased the number of dollars of available purchasing power. This purchasing power remains in circulation even though the gold itself is stored in the vaults of the Treasury.

The Administration's silver program has been almost equally inflationary in its effect. In the final analysis there is very little difference between fiat paper currency and fiat silver money. The bounty paid domestic silver producers and foreign holders of the metal involves the creation of new money, which, since it is not needed at the prevailing level of business activity, returns to the banks and is added to reserves. The increase in idle funds resulting from the Administration's monetary policy has been offset only partially by the floating of large-scale government loans. Ultimately the money borrowed is distributed as wages or relief payments and finds its way back into the banking system. The rise in business activity associated with recovery has caused a small increase in the use of currency and credit, but not to the extent to which new purchasing power has been created.

The existence of surplus reserves was of little importance as long as the Federal Reserve authorities possessed the power to smother any embryonic inflationary tendencies. But it is doubtful whether their authority is adequate to cope with the present situation. As reorganized by the Banking Act of 1935 the Federal Reserve Board has three specific devices for curbing an abnormal expansion of credit: (1) it can raise the rediscount rate; (2) it can increase the reserve requirements of member banks; and (3) it can raise or lower margin requirements on stock purchases. The first of these is certain to be wholly ineffective in the face of an over-supply of idle funds. The second has been definitely recommended by the Federal Advisory Council, but is such a drastic measure that it probably cannot be used effectively without adversely influencing earnings and driving banks out of the Federal Reserve system. Under any circumstances, all that is permitted is a doubling of reserve requirements, which would not absorb existing excess reserves. The third affects the demand for credit but has no influence on its supply.

One other important weapon remains at the disposal of the banking authorities—to sell the $2,400,000,000 in government securities now held by the Federal Reserve banks. Under the 1935 act the power of directing Federal Reserve policy in this connection was taken out of the hands of the board and intrusted to a special Federal Open Market Committee composed of seven board members and five representatives of the Reserve banks. No one will question the effectiveness of this weapon under reasonably normal conditions. The purchase of government bonds from 1930 to 1933 laid the basis for the present recovery, and disposal of these holdings would check the present incipient inflation if devaluation had not created excess reserves far in excess of security holdings. At the end of 1933 the Federal Reserve system held $2,400,000,000 in bonds as against excess reserves of less than $800,000,000; today the holdings are the same, while reserves are in excess of $3,000,000,000, not taking into account the unspent profits of revaluation which may any day be added to the present reserves. Should there be a general revival of business, these powers would obviously be inadequate to prevent a substantial credit expansion. The only effective weapon would be a steeply graduated tax program which would prevent the accumulation of idle funds.

For whether we are dealing with inflation or deflation it is evident that the fundamental problem faced by the American people is the maldistribution of wealth. The recent studies of the Brookings Institution indicate that at the present stage of economic development the concentration of income in the hands of a few must inevitably result in an inadequate consumer buying power, followed by economic stagnation or collapse. The large-scale government spending of the New Deal is an attempt to offset this tendency. The government has replaced private enterprise in a considerable sector of the national economy, but governmental expenditures have never fully made up for the contraction in private business. Moreover, there has been no fundamental redistribution of income during the depression. A privileged few have continued to obtain incomes greatly in excess of their expenditures. Lacking adequate investment opportunities, much of this excess has accumulated, useless, in the vaults of our banks—to

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the detriment of consumer buying power—or has been invested in the stock market, where it has contributed to the existing abnormal prices. Faced by a continued deficit in mass consuming power, the Administration has found it necessary to administer repeated doses of inflation. So far the effect has not been drastic, owing to lack of business confidence, but once capital begins to move into private enterprise, it will be difficult to put on the brakes.

But why seek to apply the brakes if credit inflation is synonymous with business recovery? Is this not what the Administration has been seeking to achieve for the past three years? The Advisory Council of the Federal Reserve system has supplied at least part of the answer when it declares that the "very large excess reserves of the member banks, creating a plethora of . . . bank credit, has a . . . tendency to foster and encourage speculative activity, increase prices, and raise the cost of living of the population." After its initial stages the benefits of an inflationary rise in prices are restricted to entrepreneurs, shareholders, and speculators. And experience has shown that with drastic inflation only the largest business establishments are able to maintain their position. Speculators are the one group certain to profit from the chaos which would result. Whatever gains these few might obtain would be at the expense of all other portions of society. Retail prices are more sensitive than wages or salaries, and in an inflationary period the cost of living almost invariably increases more rapidly than incomes. White-collar and professional groups would be particularly affected since their incomes are usually fixed in terms of dollars. Farmers might profit during the early stages of inflation, but would suffer more than any other group in the collapse that inevitably follows a boom.

Despite the losses which inflation would inflict on the majority of the population, a program of "sound money" has distinct political limitations. If the Republicans were again to come into power they would find it extremely difficult to take the necessary preventive steps. It would be possible, for example, by revaluing the dollar upward to reverse the forces that were set under way by the Roosevelt monetary policy. But this would almost certainly lead to a sharp collapse in prices and a renewal of the deflationary cycle. For all their talk about economy, it is doubtful whether the Republicans really yearn for this type of political suicide. A second possibility would be a vigorous program of social taxation, so as to relieve the wealthy of their troublesome surpluses. This seems even less likely under a Republican Administration. Equally remote are possibilities of a general increase in real wages or a wholesale reduction of prices. But unless one of these steps is taken there can be no escape from another 1929.

Death Rattle in Akron

BY FRANK ROBERTSON

Akron, Ohio, March 3

AKRON is an industrial boom town with the death rattle in its throat. The desperate strike at the plants of the Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company is a symptomatic spasm. The fatal affliction is capitalistic competition. The townsfolk suspect the full truth but prefer to shut their eyes. The workers in the rubber shops, however, realize what is happening and they are panicky.

Akron is experiencing its most serious labor trouble since 1923, when "Big Bill" Haywood and the I. W. W. tied the city in a knot for weeks. Now another city-wide general strike impends. The 1913 strike, which scared the rubber companies so badly that they have spent millions since then on labor-spy systems and black lists, came when the sensational Akron boom was just beginning. The automobile was coming to be an essential instrument of transportation. The World War was in the offing. Both of these factors meant a constantly expanding tire production regardless of cost. Labor commanded its own price. Wages for workers in Akron's boom shops ran from $50 to $90 a week and sometimes more. Meanwhile Akron's older industries—her cereal mills, farm-equipment factories, a truck-manufacturing plant, heavy-machinery shops, and many others in which wages were governed by the cutthroat competition of "settled business"—withered and died. Akron quickly became and has remained a one-industry town.

Today the tire industry admits to a production capacity of 75,000,000 tires a year, with a market for not more than 50,000,000. That means vicious price-cutting, ruinous selling, and a relentless drive from the top for reductions in cost. Above all it means a greater and greater speed-up for workers at smaller and smaller wages.

The banker was finding it difficult to get the unpleasantness over with, even if he was speaking for one of those financial institutions claiming to be the world's largest. The man before him was the head of the world's largest rubber company. The heavy fingers tapped the polished surface of the desk at which he sat. At last he spoke.

"Mr. Litchfield, we may as well get down to cases. Speaking for interests holding enough stock to bring about a change of management, I find it my duty to tell you that in our opinion a better showing must be made in Goodyear earnings, or we will place men in charge who are capable of getting the desired results. Putting the matter quite frankly, we want to know if you will cooperate with us in effecting certain changes of policy or if it will be necessary to install new management."

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A conversation something like the above, I am told, was primarily responsible for the strike which ten days ago closed down the sprawling Goodyear manufacturing plants here, throwing 16,000 people, one-fourth of the working population of the community, out of work. For P. W. Litchfield, who draws $81,000 a year in salary exclusive of bonuses, according to the federal income-tax reports, chose to remain and institute "certain changes."

The changes involved longer hours, lower pay, and dismissal of from 20 to 25 per cent of the employees, whose work would be done through the speed-up of those surviving. The changes also involved getting rid of men who had been with the company five, ten, and even fifteen years, replacements to be made with youths able to stand eight grueling hours at the pace set by the hated Bedaux system. The twenty-year men were to be kept as evidence that Goodyear takes care of its veterans.

In the engineering departments of Akron's enormous tire plants are built the casings and tubes on which the automobiles of the whole world ride. Machines have been devised which would eliminate two-thirds of the present number of workers and double the output, but the managements have not dared to set them up out of hand. The easier way is to slough off as many workers as possible with the machines now in operation. The ultra-modern new machinery can be set up later when the industry quits this city, as it is in gradual process of doing.

The New York bankers who laid down the law to the head of the world's greatest tire company made it plain that they had taken the trouble to whip other rubber concerns—big competitors—into line on labor policy. No matter how bitter the competition between the rubber kings, they have always been able to get together on labor problems since 1913; and any lowering of labor standards by one company is immediately imitated by all the others. But the master-minds revealed their customary stupidity when they handed Goodyear the "short straw."

It so happens that it was Goodyear, back in 1930, that began preaching the virtues of the six-hour day, having found that four men working in six-hour shifts could maintain a faster pace and earn more money for the owners than three men working eight hours each. Goodyear, too, had pioneered the company-union idea when most managements considered it suicide to discuss any problems with employees. As company unions go, so even the members of the A. F. of L. United Rubber Workers' Union tell me, the Goodyear "industrial assembly" had a good record with the men. When unionization became possible, under Section 7-a of the NRA, Goodyear was the toughest nut for the A. F. of L. boys to crack. No real success attended their efforts until Akron rubber workers, seeing the writing on the wall, began last fall to indorse enthusiastically John L. Lewis and the industrial-union idea. President Litchfield, ever since 1930, had been widely publicized throughout the United States for his advocacy, first, of the six-hour day and, later, of the thirty-hour week. He wrote a book. He gave many interviews. He signed imposing articles, with convincing statistics, in the company's own weekly paper.

When, to save his own job, he was forced to lengthen hours, cut hourly and piece-rate pay, and replace middle-aged workers who were slowing down, he couldn't take that up with his company union. Instead he had his statisticians work out a lot of phony figures about living costs and "real wages." They discovered that a man who was working six hours a day now and getting $122 a month for it could by working eight hours get more pay. To be exact, he could get $3 more a month. In a word, the proposed "readjustment" amounted to a wage cut of nearly 25 per cent, since men had to work one-third more hours for almost the same pay. And the extra hours meant that 20 to 25 per cent of the workers would lose their jobs.

This elaborate essay in misrepresentation was printed in the company house organ early last fall. Not only was a strike threatened at Goodyear; the rubber workers promised to close down Goodrich, Firestone, General, Seiberling, India, and the rest of the Akron companies.

Factory-wide application of the new schedules was called off at Goodyear. A few weeks later, however, a new device was tried. Workers were summoned individually and notified of their assignment to eight-hour shifts. Evidence collected by union leaders shows that occasionally an entire operation was put on the new schedule. This produced "sitdowns," which meant that men sat at their machines without working, but such protests failed to halt the ruthless progress of factory-wide "readjustment." According to officials of the United Rubber Workers' Union, it was the wholesale replacement of five- and ten-year men by young lads just out of school that set off the accumulated resentment and brought on the strike. It started as an "outlaw" strike, but it is "outlaw" no longer. The Goodyear local of the United Rubber Workers of America stepped into the breach, supplying leaders and a program. President William Green of the American Federation of Labor and President Lewis of the United Mine Workers temporarily have shelved their dispute over industrial and craft unions to send aid. Assistant Secretary of Labor Edward F. McGrady, back in Akron today for a second try at mediation, terms the Goodyear situation "the most critical in America." Litchfield, believing that the future of unionization not only in the rubber but in the automobile industry as well is at stake, has lost even the sympathy of Akron merchants by a flat refusal to discuss issues with representatives of the men on strike. The Akron Central Labor Union, in a rousing mass-meeting yesterday, authorized a general strike if any effort is made to reopen the strike-bound Goodyear plant. The general strike may be an actuality before this gets into print.

If Goodyear succeeds in forcing the longer day with lessened pay, the other rubber barons will "be forced to make similar adjustments." The rubber industry has seen this struggle coming. Branch factories have been built in the Southern states, where labor is cheap and the TVA promises lower power costs. Others are going to be built there just as rapidly as the rubber companies can write down their Akron plant investments. Akron is on its way to becoming like those tragic New England towns which once constituted the textile center of the world. But labor does not propose to accept its fate without fighting.

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Germany Prepares for War

BY LOUIS FISCHER

THE most important question I wanted my Berlin stay to answer was this: Will Germany's food and financial troubles seriously impair its ability to complete its armament program? I think the answer is in the negative.

German industrial production has reached a post-war high. But much of it can neither be eaten nor worn. Germany is freezing huge quantities of its capital in war materials. Experts estimate that 3,000,000 more persons are employed now than in January, 1933—there are 750,000 more office-holders, 750,000 more soldiers and sailors, and 1,500,000 more factory hands. But the volume of consumers' commodities remains relatively low. The period between January, 1933, and October, 1934, therefore saw a 25 per cent reduction in real wages for industrial and clerical workers, and the total fall in Germany's standard of living under the Hitler regime is put at 30 to 35 per cent. If the inferior quality of manufactured articles is included, the decline is greater still. Hitler and the papers predict further sacrifices and hardships in 1936. "The wage level," Joseph Winschuh, writing in the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* of December 31, warns, "will scarcely tolerate further price rises." Goebbels has announced that wages cannot be increased. Yet shortage pushes prices up. Indeed, Winschuh himself says that exports must be stimulated and that "the standard of living should be subordinated to this purpose." The year 1936 promises no relief and no improvement. Nevertheless, the best observers, foreign as well as German, expect that the production of German military equipment will actually be intensified during the first six months of 1936, only to taper off after June on account of money stringency. The technical apparatus of the German army—aeroplanes, guns, tanks, and so on—will reach its high point in 1936, when the army will be fully prepared for war.

In other respects, however, 1936 will not find Germany ready for war. Nation-wide military conscription has just commenced, and the Reichswehr's *cadres* are not sufficiently trained for a conflict with major powers. Nor have the enlarged officers' corps and staff had time to acquire the efficiency and knowledge demanded by modern warfare. The World War veterans are old, physically below par, and technically backward. Germany must wait till the new millions are molded into soldiers fit for long and trying battles. When will that be? Some specialists say 1937, most say 1938, some say 1939. The Reichswehr today probably numbers 800,000 commanders and men. In 1939 it will count 1,000,000 men under arms and 2,500,000 freshly drilled reserves. This is about the right amount of cannon fodder for a beginning.

The chief problem is raw materials. The government will endeavor to purchase some fats abroad on its clearing agreements but it will devote its foreign currency as far as possible to imports of raw materials. Nevertheless, in the event of a blockade or effective League of Nations sanctions Germany might lose a prolonged war by reason of its limited natural resources. Germany uses 3,500,000 tons of petroleum a year. Very little is mined at home. Borings have been made in numerous places, deposits have been discovered, and the wells have been sealed for future exploitation. Astounding progress has been registered by the synthetic-petroleum industry. Germany already produces one-third of its annual motor-fuel requirements. In 1938 this will have been raised to two-thirds, and in 1939 to 100 per cent. If private automobiles were taken off the streets, the volume of home-made oil would eliminate the necessity of oil imports in 1938. Germany is also creating huge reserves of petroleum. Foreign countries obligingly aid. The air force needs very high-grade lubricants. Germany lacks the experience and technique to refine them. The American Socony-Vacuum Company, therefore, is building a refinery in Hamburg which will convert inferior oil into aviation lubricants. The plant will be finished this year.

Research laboratories are working on substitutes for steel, iron, copper, cotton, and sulphur. The authorities have a scientific record of all non-ferrous metals in private and industrial use. In time of war these reserves—underground telephone cables, for instance—would be requisitioned. Germany, moreover, is financing the production of soya beans in Hungary, bauxite in Yugoslavia, and tobacco in Bulgaria; the German Vereinigte Stahlwerke own 1,700,000 of the 3,000,000 shares of the Alpine-Montan Company, the largest metallurgical firm in Austria. Germany hopes to draw supplies from these sources when war breaks out.

The army's orders are the chief food of German heavy industry, and industry in turn subordinates its activities to military considerations. The army is supervising the erection of a big Opel automobile plant at Brandenburg. There are General Motors and International Telegraph and Telephone Company factories in Germany which, though American-owned, cannot be entered by any American; they are turning out war equipment.

All Germany is an armed camp. One who like myself returns to Germany after irregular absences notices the marked increase in the number of Reichswehr cars and uniforms. The ordinary army trucks which now pass through the streets of Berlin are painted with camouflage. This is a part of the practical preparation for war. But it is also part of the psychological preparation which goes on with unrelenting intensity every hour of every day in the press, radio, and schools.

Germany's mental mobilization is of supreme impor-

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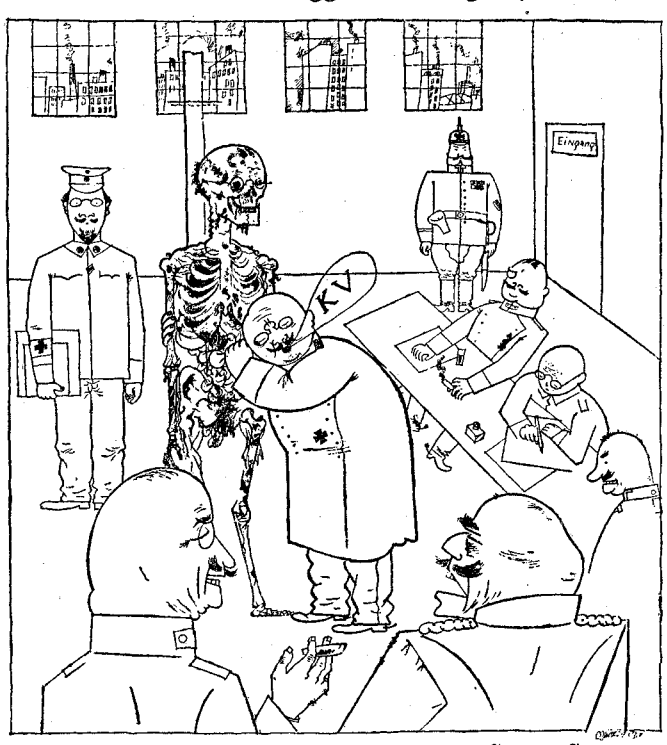
tance. Every nation is frantically increasing its armaments. This phenomenon has become so normal that few ever stop to think how many shoes, shirts, loaves of bread, pounds of meat and butter, medicines, comforts, and pleasures it steals from hundreds of millions of human beings every morning, afternoon, and evening. Sometimes one comes to the conclusion that a humanity which submits to such madness really deserves a war which will exterminate most of it. Mental mobilization is largely to blame for the supineness with which populations accept the privations resulting from armaments. Every government tells its citizens that arms are necessary either for defense or to maintain national dignity and honor. German papers regularly pay homage to Adolf Hitler because his conscription declaration of March 16, 1935, restored to Germany pride and self-esteem. It is for this, it is said, that Germany is concentrating its industrial efforts on war preparations. I do not underestimate the significance of nationalism and patriotism in politics. But I do not believe that the primary purpose of the Nazis' rearmament program is to feed these sentiments. There must be another object. Is it territorial aggression? German statesmen deny this, but could they do otherwise? They must deny or stand condemned and exposed. Germany, in fact, charges that Bolshevik Russia harbors aggressive designs, just as Rome



George Grosz

Passed Fit for Service

charged that Abyssinia was the aggressor. The Germans contend that they are pacific, and Hitler has made several speeches which are quoted in Berlin as evidence of Germany's deep desire for peace. Can an objective truth be lifted out of this polemic?

The Germans, notoriously, have always been bad diplomats, and the reason is that they put little trust in diplomacy and therefore little effort into it. They respect force; they are cynical about words. Hitler came to power in January, 1933. Poland grew frightened. In the previous year equality in armaments had been conceded to Germany by the League, and Warsaw feared that a rearmed Germany ruled by super-nationalistic Nazis would seriously menace Danzig and the Corridor. In March, 1933, accordingly, the late Marshal Pilsudski concentrated five army corps near the German frontier and sounded France and England on the desirability of a preventive war against Fascist Germany. Rumor has it that General Weygand, then French Chief of Staff, lent an ear to the idea. In April Polish troops occupied the Westerplatte, a strip of Danzig territory. It looked like the beginning of war. On May 16, 1933, President Hindenburg wrote to his assistant, State Secretary Meissner, a note the facsimile of which was published in the Berlin *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* of August 12, 1934. It said: "These days you can of course get in touch with me at any time of the day or night." The very next day Hitler summoned the Reichstag to listen to a long pacifist speech. "No new European war," the Chancellor declared wisely, "could create conditions better than the unsatisfactory conditions of today. . . . Germany is always ready to assume further security obligations of an international character. . . . Germany would be prepared to abolish its entire military establishment." The world at large did not know that these promises were designed to ward off an imminent war. The Western powers, however, were glad to take Hitler at his word because they did not want to fight. Paris vetoed Pilsudski's preventive war.

Chancellor Hitler made another pacifist speech on May 21, 1935. Every German with whom I have spoken recently quoted this address as the cornerstone of German foreign policy. The address had two motifs, one of which was friendship for England. Three weeks later the Anglo-German naval agreement was signed. Hitler wanted it very much. The speech of May 21 was a bid for it. The second motif was hostility to Bolshevik Russia. Hitler outdid himself in fiercely, wildly attacking Moscow. On the next day the German government offered the Soviet government a billion-mark long-term credit. Germany needs Soviet raw materials—oil, manganese, timber, and so on—and wants to put her unemployed plant to work. Even though Moscow must distinguish between business advantages and political sympathies, it has not accepted the proposal.

That speech would reward fuller analysis than it can receive here. Berlin will hark back to it more than once. Its fundamental thesis was National Socialism's rejection of collective security. A catastrophe like the first World War, Hitler said, "can arise all the more easily when the possibility of localizing smaller conflicts has been rendered less and less by an international network of intersecting obligations, and the danger of numerous nations being dragged into the struggle becomes all the greater." How could a war be localized? Very simple. "The other nations," Hitler suggests, should "withdraw at once from both sides at the outbreak of such a conflict rather than allow themselves to be involved in this conflict from the outset by treaty obligations." Concretely, this means that if Germany attacks Czecho-Slovakia or Austria or Lithuania, the other nations, the nations bound by treaties to aid the invaded country, are to withdraw at

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once and let Germany and Lithuania or Germany and Czecho-Slovakia fight it out between themselves. Then, let us assume, Germany, having gobbled up the first victim, moves on Hungary or Yugoslavia. Again the other nations refrain from interfering and try to keep the struggle localized between Germany and its single antagonist. If one accepts Hitler's contention that Germany will never become an aggressor, this idea becomes ludicrous. The Soviet Union, let us say, violates Poland. The result would probably be the subjugation of Poland. Being bent on aggression Moscow would probably next attack Germany. Would it not be in Germany's interest if, the moment Russia struck at Poland, all neighbors should fall upon Russia collectively and nip aggression in the bud? What is this adamant objection to collective security, then, if not an attempt to prevent the formation of a united front against Germany in case it precipitates war? I was unable to get an answer from any German with whom I argued this point. I think there is no answer. Indeed, Hitler's presentation of May 21, 1935, warrants the fear that Germany has reserved for itself certain spheres of future conflict. One is Austria. Hitler stated that he wanted "self-determination" for Austria. A high German official said to me the other day that Germany wanted a plebiscite in Austria to determine whether or not Austria wished to adhere to Germany. Germany has been asked and has refused to guarantee Austria's territorial integrity. The second is Lithuania. "We are ready," Hitler declared on May 25, "to conclude pacts of non-aggression with all our neighbors except Lithuania." This may sound innocent, especially as Hitler added that if Lithuania adhered to the Memel statute which guarantees the rights of the German minority the exception could be removed. But this problem is a complicated one. It may remain open for a long time. And Lithuania is a step toward the Soviet frontier.

Anti-Sovietism is now most popular in Germany. In his recent interview with François-Poncet, the French Ambassador, Hitler devoted a great deal of time to an attack on the U. S. S. R. In his three-hour talk on December 13 with Sir Eric Phipps, the British Ambassador, Hitler spent even more time arguing against the U. S. S. R. Some weeks ago Hitler gave an audience to the staff of the S. S. His main theme was anti-Sovietism. No item favorable to Russia may appear in the German press. The intellectual and ideological barrage for aggression against the Soviet Union is in full swing. The persons who think it dangerous, those who recall that Germany lost the war of 1914-18 when the Kaiser scrapped Bismarck's policy of friendship with Russia, are ignored. But the preparations are not only intellectual. A judicious American to whose judgment many defer informed me in London some time ago that "while he had no proof, he was convinced that a German-Japanese alliance existed and that it was aimed against Russia." Germany is training Japanese military aviators. In December twenty-six German aircraft specialists went to Japan via Italy. Japanese delegates to the naval conference stayed with General Göring for two days en route to London. Other evidence is not wanting.

But perhaps, since Germany will not be ready for war

George Grosz

Workmen's Quarter

until about 1938, there is no cause for immediate alarm. This would be a false and dangerous attitude. Until 1937 or 1938 or 1939 Germany will not be in a position to cope single-handed with a group of powers which includes France. But if Germany finds an ally in Japan or Poland or Hungary, the date may be advanced. Moreover, the weaker the probable coalition against Germany, the nearer the catastrophe. Innumerable Germans are convinced that Britain's preoccupation with Italy and the Far East and its dread of air attacks upon London will keep England out of the next war unless it is directly menaced. Would England be as ready to give battle for Austria, Czecho-Slovakia or Lithuania as it was for Abyssinia? The fate of European civilization may depend on the answer.

Everything, accordingly, depends on how many friends Germany can win and on the extent to which it can undermine the potential enemy. The outstanding and rather transparent purpose of German diplomacy at present is to separate France from Russia, France from England, and Russia from England. Simultaneously it strives to weave closer ties with London as a preliminary to neutralization. But even this last all-important goal is subordinated to Germany's policy vis-a-vis Italy. A weakened Italy makes Germany's task in Austria easier. On the other hand a revisionist and embittered, because thwarted, Italy might be an ally in a world war. Yet Italy could also side with France against Germany. Italy's defeat in Abyssinia might end in Mussolini's fall, which would react to the detriment of German fascism, both at home and abroad. That defeat, if hastened by League collective action, would be a terrifying precedent for the next aggressor. Germany, therefore, watches the Ethiopian affair with hope, trepidation, and indecision. It does not wish to offend England by word or gesture, but it also does not want to alienate Italy. Hence the "neutrality" to which Germans point as proof of their pacifism. They are waiting to see how the wind blows.

Europe's great good fortune is that the period of highest tension in Italy, which produced the Abyssinian adventure, did not coincide with the same period in Germany. If the two periods had coincided, the two countries would be allies and Europe would be a shambles. European statesmen feel obliged to settle the Anglo-Italian-Ethiopian conflict before the German problem grows much riper. This is wisdom. It is also difficult.

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A Note on Literary Criticism

BY JAMES T. FARRELL

II

THERE are three acceptable definitions of proletarian literature. It may be defined as creative literature written by a member of the industrial proletariat without regard to his political orientation, as creative writing that deals with some phase of the life of the industrial proletariat, or as creative writing that by reason of the author's point of view or his actual use of the material is concerned with the life, the problems, or the attitudes of that segment of the proletariat which is class conscious.

No matter which of these definitions one utilizes, the fact remains that they do not become categories of value, and that they do not constitute an a priori basis for the critical destruction of works that will not fit easily into these categories. Further, whichever one of these definitions is used, it does not follow that work fitting snugly into it will be uninfluenced by "non-proletarian" writing.

The terms "bourgeois" and "proletarian," as used in literary criticism, are then merely descriptive. Within the category of bourgeois will be found progressive as well as regressive elements; and surely one of the tasks of the critic is to further the understanding and efficacy of the progressive elements wherever they may be found. Only in this way can he hope to release and not dam up the stream of cultural continuity.

A generalized description of one function of literature is that it provides a record of how people live and feel in different epochs. John Strachey, in "The Coming Struggle for Power," writes:

> "Literature" is perhaps the most remarkable of all the ideal constructions which the human mind has begotten. It is a great sea into which for centuries have been poured all those thoughts, dreams, fantasies, concepts, ascertained facts, and emotions which did not fit into any of the other categories of human thought. Into literature have gone philosophical ideas too tenuous for the philosophers, dreams too literal for plastic expression, ascertained facts too uncorrelated for science, and emotions too intertwined with the particular instance to find expression in the glorious and precise abstractions of music.

It is characteristic of life that it constantly tends to overflow the intellectual categories which are set up as the basis for apprehending, organizing, understanding, and controlling it. Strachey's definition is a description of the role that literature plays in acting as a reservoir for this overflow. Continuing, Strachey writes:

> Literature, for the most part, attempts to illuminate some particular predicament of a particular man or a particular woman at a given time and place.

This would seem to suggest that there can be in literature a considerable degree of diversity in method, in procedure, in content. But the "leftist" enthusiasts often allow it no such latitude. Consider, for example, the false bifurcation they have established between the "individualistic" and the "collective" novel. Individualism, in the context of classical economy, reflects the belief that the individual is the best judge of his own needs and wants, and that he has a right to satisfy them in his own way with a minimum of legal restraint. But the term has been taken out of its context and as a result has attained a justly merited unpopularity; finally, used in its most derogatory sense, it has been smuggled into "leftist" literary criticism. A work describing the particular predicament of a particular man or woman at a particular period of time has been criticized as individualistic, and therefore as a "bourgeois" hangover representing a false psychology.

John Dos Passos's novel, "The 42nd Parallel," on the other hand, has been praised as a collective novel. Yet there is no important or noticeable difference between the manner in which Dos Passos seeks to establish character and the manner in which many so-called "individualistic" novels establish it. The characters in "The 42nd Parallel" have thoughts and feelings. They say things. They participate in various actions. They make, or they fail to make, relevant analyses of the meanings of what they say, do, think, and see. Where is the essential difference? What Dos Passos does is to rely on size, extent, and number rather than on intensified evocation of a few characters.

A novelist in developing characters is or should be aware that they belong to a group or a class, and that that group or class is a conditioning factor; he knows also that human beings resemble one another and are subject, moreover, to the working of a whole series of natural laws and of social processes. But he is also concerned with his characters as unique human beings. Yet in so far as a novelist deals not only with the similarities but also with the dissimilarities in human beings, his work must be tainted with the individualistic psychology which the "leftists" profess to abhor. What is the precise meaning of "individualistic psychology," and what is the precise meaning of "collective psychology"? What have critics been talking about when they have indulged in this particular kind of distinction?

The truth is that it is a false distinction; and the confused use of the categories of bourgeois and proletarian in critical writing is the result of a crass and oversimplified utilization of the Marxian concept of the class struggle. It is true that the Marxian concept of this struggle posits the existence, objectively, of social classes. But how does the class struggle impinge upon the life of an individual? It impinges upon him in his role as a breadwinner. It dictates his relationships to other men; it de-

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limits the kind of life he may live. It builds up habits of response and thinking of which he may or may not be aware. But the class struggle does not in any sense produce so complete and total a differentiation between human beings as to wipe out all similarities between those who, objectively, belong to different classes. Neither does it mean that at every minute of a man's life the class struggle is a direct, potent, and conscious factor in his life.

One of the mistakes of "leftist" criticism is that it has hypostatized the class struggle and made it an article of faith. This has been damaging in two ways. In the first place, it has led writers to build their characters from this concept instead of from life, with the result that these characters have been merely obvious and unrewarding illustrations of a thesis. In the second place, critics who praise such works go one bad step farther and use them to diminish the reputation and the understanding of works that have not conformed to their false standard. Yet the works they have celebrated are merely the restatements of ideas that have been developed in books and articles and pamphlets, to which no understanding or life has been given. The so-called characters who people them are merely abstractions walking in the wrong place.

Closely connected with such a utilization of the Marxian concept of the class struggle has been the confusing use of the slogan, "All art is propaganda." When one makes the attempt to propagandize large masses of people, it is necessary, of course, to find common denominators. This means that ideas must be conventionalized into slogans or stereotypes. Lenin's slogans were effective propaganda in this sense, but do those who defend and advocate the formula that all art is propaganda mean it in this sense? If so, they seem to be confusing the tactics and the role of the politician with literary practice and the function of literature. Politics is obviously concerned with government. It must find answers which can be embodied in action. Literature is not and cannot be so directly concerned with finding immediate answers in terms of action.

When the attempt has been made to press it into such service, the result has often been mere ineptitude. An instance of such ineptitude is to be found in a number of the so-called proletarian "poems" written in America a few years ago and published in various little magazines. In those days any number of poets constructed verses which had no evocative power but were merely statements. Such poems did not add anything to the readers' awareness or understanding, but appealed only to convictions already imbedded in the minds of a very limited audience. These poems would make statements about the conditions of American workers in various industries, and then suddenly in bold-faced type would leap to the slogan, "All power to the Soviets." Besides being bad poetry, such efforts were also bad politics, because they lacked intelligent reference to the problems, the needs, and the psychological state of the American worker. They were examples of that extremism which Lenin castigated in one of the genuine classics of revolutionary thought, " 'Left Communism'; an Infantile Disorder."

Sometimes propaganda is given a different meaning. It is now taken to mean the expression of any idea, attitude, emotion, or sentiment. But when it is given this meaning, when literary history is combed to show that one writer preached despair, another wrote to prove the world was pessimistic, another to make people believe that man was good, and another to show the lift in the eternal spirit of man, the meaning of the term is broadened to meaninglessness. For if propaganda is used in this broad sense, the work of almost any writer can be shown to mean almost anything. What happens generally is that left extremists use "propaganda" in its larger sense when they are referring to the literature of the past, and in its narrower sense when they are referring to the literature of the present—and then establish a conclusion based on the false notion that they have used the word in the same sense in both references.

Propaganda, then, must be given a more definite meaning. And I believe that in America it should mean a method of conventionalizing and epitomizing thought and policy. Given such a meaning, it is not applicable to literature, and if it is applied it will retard the development of literature, prevent it from producing what it can produce and from serving the function in society which it is equipped to serve. One of the aims of literature, as of all art, is to present fresh insights and new interpretations, to render qualities and surfaces in such a way as to increase awareness and extend sensibility. Another of the aims of literature, aptly defined above by Strachey, is to provide a reservoir for the overflow of experience. And if this be one of its functions, some other content must be given to the formula, "Literature is propaganda."

It is for this reason that I have chosen the phrase, "Literature is an instrument of social control." As such it serves various functions. It increases understanding. It makes readers more intensely conscious of the problems of life, the predicaments of people, the possibilities and limitations of living, the diversity of human experience. It makes implicit or explicit judgments on the value of conditions, actions, thoughts, situations, environments, hopes, despairs, ideals, dreams, fantasies. It also provides its readers with additional equipment for proceeding with their own lives. It points their emotions, their impulses, their wishes, and their thoughts toward or away from certain goals. It creates in an ideal and formal sense the consciousness of an epoch.

My objection to "leftist" revolutionary criticism is that it ignores the proper tasks which criticism must perform. Literature is created out of a complex in which the preponderantly causal factor is material relationships. But it in turn has an effect on the future. It both reflects the past and organizes the future. But its functions are not exhausted or even well performed if it seeks to limit itself to the usurping of functions better served by direct political agitation, by political slogans, and by political pamphlets. Its main effect, and also its more lasting effect, as literature, is the result of making men understand their world more clearly, of making them feel life more keenly, more quickly, more sensitively, more imaginatively. In this way it plays its role in changing the world.

[*Part I of Mr. Farrell's article appeared last week. It is concluded in this issue.*]

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Buzz Windrip—Governor of Georgia

BY BENJAMIN STOLBERG

II

ABOUT a century and a half ago Gene Talmadge's great-grandfather came from New Jersey and settled on a small farm in Monroe County in central Georgia. Ever since the Talmadges have been small owning farmers. In 1934 Our Gene bought the original homestead, largely for sentimental reasons, and added it to the extensive landed possessions which his wife had inherited from her first husband. On week-ends he usually drives down to this old Talmadge farm, plows, feeds the hogs, and gets his shoes full of manure. He is a *dirt* farmer! Unlike those dudes, Wallace and Tugwell, he *knows* what the farmer needs. The farmer must get *higher* prices while he raises *all* he can! "But how can he do both?" I asked. "He can do both," was the answer, "by hard work if he is unintimidated, unmolested, and not taxed to death.

His Excellency was born on September 23, 1884, in Forsyth, Monroe County. In 1907 he graduated from the law school of the University of Georgia. After a brief and sorry attempt to practice law in Atlanta, he went back to central Georgia. He settled in Telfair County, five miles from the county seat, McRae. Rapidly he went native again. He was a good Baptist, a sound Democrat, a Sigma Nu, and strong for fertilizer without sand. Above all, he was a pillar of White Supremacy, not loudly but with the assured bigotry of the cracker born and bred. From 1912 on he mainly farmed. He helped his neighbors with legal counsel. He dabbled in parochial politics more and more. In 1918 he achieved the solicitorship of the McRae City Court. From 1920 to 1923 he was attorney for Telfair County. Eugene Talmadge was slowly rising in the Georgia veldt. All he needed was an issue and a public enemy. The issue, of course, was the perennial plight of the farmer. The enemy was J. J. Brown.

J. J. Brown had been Commissioner of Agriculture almost since Oglethorpe. He was so much of a fixture that nobody thought of challenging his power. His department was corrupt, smug, and inefficient. He had over two hundred "oil inspectors" alone, whose only apparent function was to keep his machine well greased. In 1927 Talmadge decided to run against Brown, and to everybody's surprise he was elected.

For three terms, from 1927 to 1933, Talmadge was Commissioner of Agriculture. All he accomplished during that period was to reduce the number of oil inspectors to six, to slash other really essential services, to cut wages by about 25 per cent, to enforce with far more noise than vigor the law which specifies the content of fertilizer, and above all to give full scope to his gifts of demagogy. He filled every issue of his *Market Bulletin* with political harangues. He made a big show—and a big flop—of finding new markets for Georgia farm products and hogs, and of boosting farm prices. He also was almost impeached for taking a flier in hogs in Chicago, losing illegally $12,000 of the state's money. "I stole it for you," he told an assembly of farmers later on. He saved himself by the Huey Long technique of fixing enough Senators to sign a round robin not to impeach him.

During his commissionership of agriculture Talmadge intrenched himself in the affections of Georgia's crackerdom. He did not rise by building a powerful machine. He does not have one now. He is singularly impotent in inspiring loyalty in able men, good or bad. The gang around him is a collection of a dozen dreary heels—shabby, inept, corrupt, and Ku Klux-minded. They are outspoken Negrophobes, Jew-haters, labor-baiters. In short, Talmadge consolidated his power psychologically rather than structurally. He is a congenital night-rider with an irresistible appeal to the vigilante spirit, the recrudescence of which in the black belt can be measured by the depth of the depression. As Commissioner of Agriculture he was in covert intimacy with the Black Shirts, the "American Fascisti." Their program was "to protect the chastity of White Womanhood," "to maintain and forever secure White Supremacy," to place white men in black men's jobs, and primarily to terrorize both white and black labor in town and country. Their chief sport, especially through 1930, was night-riding among the colored share-croppers. The leading spirits in this organization, all enthusiastic Talmadge men, were John A. Boykin, who as Solicitor General of Fulton County secured the conviction of Angelo Herndon; Judge James Davis of the Stone Mountain Circuit Court, a sort of modern Simon Legree on the bench, and Kenneth Murrell and Al Henson of the American Legion. All through the state local judges, small-town lawyers and prosecutors, chiefs of police, sheriffs and their deputies were enrolled Black Shirts, whose official sheet was a monthly incitement to lynching and terrorism. Today this same crowd call themselves Men of Justice. The leading personnel is the same. These Men of Justice are the shock troops of Talmadge's campaigns. Not so very long ago they framed a number of colored bell hops with white prostitutes in several Atlanta hotels and then forced the managers to hire white bell hops in their stead. Talmadge is even closer to the Women's National Association for the Preservation of the White Race. The "national president" of this society is a Mrs. J. E. Andrews. Her anthropological views are strictly Nazi. In the monthly organ of her society, the *Georgia Woman's World,* she writes essays in defense of the "Gentiles," arguing that Lincoln was assassinated by the international Jewry, that Jews and Negroes are descended from the more villainous characters in the Bible,

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and that the Roosevelt family spends all its time with Negroes. The printing bill of this lynch sheet, of which thousands of copies were recently distributed by Talmadge's game wardens, is paid in cash by the office of Hugh Howell, the state Democratic chairman.

In short, Talmadge rose to power entirely on the ground swell of bigotry and ignorance. And he keeps in power by exploiting the lowest passions engendered by the pauper misery of the rural sections. In 1934 the average gross income—cash and produce—per family of even the owning farmers in Georgia was only a little more than $500 a year; that of the average tenant farmer was around $250 a year; and the total income of the average share-cropper of either race, when he was not thrown off the land, was about $150 a year. Such incomes breed Talmadges.

By 1932 Talmadge felt himself strong enough to run for governor, and in looking around for "radical" issues he found three. His main plank was a flat three-dollar automobile-license tag. He also came out for a reduction in taxes and public-utility rates. The moment he was elected he cut the essential personnel and the pay rolls of the various state services to the bone, some 25 per cent. Through his control of the Senate he reduced school appropriations drastically—in a state which leads in illiteracy. With questionable legality, though he was later upheld in the courts, he evicted the old and corrupt highway board and put in his own gang. Two of the three highway commissioners are under the thumb of John A. Whitley, a highway contractor, known as "the slave driver" for paying as low as ten cents an hour to free labor. Talmadge also fired the old Public Service Commission, which he had a legal right to do, and appointed as chairman of the new Public Service Commission Jud P. Wilhoit, the only competent and efficient appointment of his career. He immediately suspended the collection of all automobile-license taxes except the flat three-dollar tax. When the time came for assessing ad valorem taxes he reduced them from five mills to four, thus cutting the state's income for social services by one million dollars a year.

The three-dollar automobile tax is, of course, a boomerang to the cheap-car owner. A real reform would have graduated the tax from three dollars up, thus allowing cheap tags without robbing the state of a $3,000,000 income from taxes on expensive cars, trucks, and buses.

In his fight against the public utilities Talmadge first threatened to equalize their valuation for tax purposes with their valuation for rate-making purposes. The Georgia Power Company, the leading public utility in the state, is allowed to evaluate itself at $45,757,000 for tax purposes, while the same company is allowed to charge electric rates on its own property valuation in excess of $230,000,000. Talmadge of course never even attempted to carry out his threat of equalization. But he did reduce rates. Yet the same public utilities which had fought him bitterly during his first campaign subsidized heavily his campaign for reelection. What really happened was that the general tax reduction from five to four mills cost the Georgia Power Company only some $50,000 in tax increases, while the rate reduction actually increased its earnings, as Mr. Wilhoit said it would and as the company stupidly refused to believe. The increase in the use of electricity due to an 18 per cent reduction has netted the company $120,000 a year. The same thing happened in all the other public utilities. The 17 per cent reduction in telephone rates has installed in one year 14,300 more telephones in Atlanta alone. In other words, the public utilities gained in income and in liberal reputation. "Of course," Mr. Wilhoit admitted, "cheaper utility rates make little difference in the rural communities. These reductions are helpful in the larger cities and to people in least need of relief." Through the state only about one out of seven owning farmers uses electricity; tenants and share-croppers almost never do. Outside of Atlanta only about one family in twelve has a telephone.

Talmadge's state-tax reduction of one mill penalizes mainly the rural counties which have always received more from the state treasury than they put into it. It has forced these counties to raise more in local taxes for their social services, especially for schools. Greene County, a typical one, has had to raise a special school tax. But even after this increase in local taxation the public schools had less money than in pre-Talmadge days. The real effect of Talmadge's reduced-taxation plan can be seen in the allocation of $1,600,000 by the federal Administration in the spring of 1934 to keep the rural schools of Georgia from closing. As in everything else Talmadge ever did, he thundered from the left and showered upon the right.

It was during his first administration that Talmadge began to fight the national government. At first he cooperated willingly enough with the FERA and the WPA. The federal government allocated the funds and Talmadge appointed the jobholders who administered them. When it became too crassly obvious that the Talmadge machine was converting federal relief and public works into a local racket, the Administration took the whole thing out of the Governor's hands. This is the real source of his bitterness against Roosevelt's "killing religion in the hah'ts of the American people."

By the time Talmadge was running for his second term he had become the darling of all the big business interests. And he completely solidified his position with the industrialists, especially the cotton manufacturers, during the great textile strike of September, 1934. The primary election was to be held on Wednesday, September 12. On the preceding Friday he met at the Hotel Ansley in Atlanta with about twenty of the leading textile manufacturers of the state and with Theodore M. Forbes, secretary of the Cotton Manufacturers' Association of Georgia. At this meeting it was arranged that immediately after election day Talmadge was to call out the National Guard and break the strike. For this service the manufacturers raised a purse of approximately $20,000, which was given in cash to John A. Whitley, the highway contractor, for campaign purposes. For such purposes, the textile workers pointed out, this gift seemed quite unnecessary, for Talmadge's reelection was never in doubt. He carried 156 out of the 159 counties in the state.

Immediately after election Talmadge declared martial law, called out 3,700 national guardsmen, and put hun-

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dreds of workers into an open concentration camp near Fort McPherson. The only mills which received no "protection" were the Calloway mills. Mr. Calloway refused to contribute to the campaign fund. But during a strike in February, 1935, the Calloway mills did get troops by "putting the heat" on the Governor. The most amusing incident in Talmadge's strike-breaking tactics occurred when he shipped Pearl Bergoff's gunmen out of the state. The newsreels publicized this fact as a liberal gesture. Talmadge, of course, chased Bergoff's outfit away because they threatened to compete with his own activities. "Talmadge is the best Governor this state ever had," Mr. Forbes confided. "He broke the strike for us."

Toward the end of 1935 Talmadge had the upper house, which he controls, force the adjournment of the Legislature without an appropriation bill for 1936. At this moment the state of Georgia is ruled financially without legislative appropriation. On January 31, 1935, the state had $2,500,412 left. Of this $1,395,582.74 was allocated. The rest of it the Governor can use as he pleases —if he can get away with it. The state also has some seven and a half million dollars of unexpended money, a good deal of it in the highway department. With this amount Talmadge figured he could run the state until June, 1936, and he stated that when the time came for collecting new taxes he would do so through martial law. The whole procedure is raucously unconstitutional, for all the Governor has to do is to call a special session of the Legislature. But this Talmadge does not care to do, partly because he prefers to juggle the funds and partly because of the growing sentiment for his impeachment.

This whole procedure was as stupid as it was brazenly illegal. Talmadge is by no means intrenched in his dictatorship as was Huey Long. And he has by no means planned out his campaign of financial thuggery. At this moment it looks as though Mr. Talmadge is going to be far too busy in his own state, at least for a while, to play much of a part in the national campaign.

But the publicity which all these dictatorial antics brought him before he got into this jam made him feel that he was enough of a national figure to issue a call for a "Grass Roots Democratic Convention" in Macon, Georgia, for January 29, 1936. Talmadge's co-signer of this call was John Thomas Kirby, a millionaire Texas oil and lumber man, a nominal Democrat, for years a high-pressure tariff lobbyist, thick with the National Republican Committee, and devout disciple of the Liberty League.

Talmadge's contact man with Northern Republican and reactionary forces is Barry Wright, who was Hoover's Georgia campaign manager in 1932 and Talmadge's go-between with the textile manufacturers in the 1934 strike. The more reactionary Republican forces have promised Talmadge that in case of a Republican victory he will be the "Jeffersonian Democrat" in the Cabinet as Secretary of Agriculture. And the Liberty League helped finance the Macon convention with a subsidy of $5,000.

Now who were some of the "dirt farmers" invited to this Grass Roots Convention? One of the leading delegates was W. C. Bradley of Columbus, Georgia, known as Mr. Columbus, chairman of the board of that bulwark of Jeffersonian freedom, the Coco-Cola Company. Mr. Columbus is also president of three-quarters of the banks and half the cotton mills, and is on the boards of all the others in Columbus. Another Jeffersonian Democrat invited was George Lanier of West Point, Georgia, president of the West Point Manufacturing Company, the third largest textile chain in the South. Among the leading "dirt farmers" was also John Barry of Rome, Georgia, the largest hosiery manufacturer in the state, owner of two stove foundries and a notorious open-shopper. Another delegate was H. D. Pollard of Savannah, Georgia, president of the Central of Georgia Railroad Company and the Ocean Steamship Company. Also present was Thomas L. Dixon, author of "The Clansman" and professional Negro-baiter, who addressed the convention in the best spirit of the Klan. And finally there was the Reverend Gerald L. K. Smith, organizer of the practically defunct Share Our Wealth movement, who soon after Huey Long's death was sidetracked by the Louisiana machine because of his fantastic notion that he was the inheritor of Huey's mantle. For the rest there were Men of Justice, sheriffs and their deputies, county attorneys, all sorts of small political fry, and a crowd of gaping cracker yokels. Of the 2,500 "delegates" present about 2,350 were Georgians. Talmadge had expected around 10,000 from all over the South.

On every seat of this "convention" lay a copy of the *Woman's World*. The editor of this rag is a Mrs. James Rogers Wakefield. I called on Mrs. Wakefield. I found her incredibly common, ignorant, and half-tight. From people who know her past I gathered that journalism has not always been Mrs. Wakefield's profession. Much of the filth which appears in this lynch sheet is written in the office of Hugh Howell, the state Democratic chairman and Talmadge's man Friday, whose legal practice is almost entirely confined to what is known throughout the state as the "pardon racket." William Schley Howard, for many years a progressive Congressman and one of the leading criminal lawyers in the South, has some amazing evidence on the pardon ring, of which the two leaders are Hugh Howell and a lawyer named Charles Stewart. Mr. Howell drove me out one Sunday morning to Stone Mountain. On the way we got on the race question. "Do you really mean to say," asked Mr. Howell, "that you don't believe in lynching at any time?"

The "convention" was a total failure. It did not even pretend to organize itself. It cussed out the New Deal, spewed forth race hatred, warned the American people against the "communism" of President Roosevelt, and called the amalgam a "platform." It probably finished Talmadge as a national gadfly. It was significant only as a Northern-financed effort to create regional fascism in the darkest South.

The Liberty League bought a pig in a poke. It will have to wait for a bigger and better demagogue. Huey was right. Talmadge is "too dumb for his ambition." He is, however, a political symptom of the social lesions of our time, especially south of the Mason and Dixon Line.

[*This is the second of two articles on Governor Talmadge by Mr. Stolberg. The first appeared last week.*]

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Issues and Men

BY OSWALD GARRISON VILLARD

UNDER the heading The Fallacy of Conquest, Nathaniel Peffer recently contributed an admirable article to *Harper's Magazine*. Dealing with the stupidity of those who believe that a nation can add to its wealth by subjugating native peoples or robbing them of part of their territory, it brings the discussion up to date by taking up directly the case of Italy, Germany, and Japan. Especially valuable is his demolition of the current humbug that we must deal gently with these nations because they must have their "place in the sun," because they are without sufficient colonies, or because their overflowing populations cannot be adequately maintained on the territory they have. Mr. Peffer confirms what some of us have been saying right along—that colonies do not today relieve congested populations. England, the largest colonial power, would gladly export two million workers if it could. The dominions have put up immigration bars against the mother country, and the tropical colonies take only Englishmen of the ruling class. British labor cannot compete with tropical labor.

The biggest humbug of all is the demand of Germany for the return of its colonies, which Hitler recently made a prerequisite for limitation of air armaments in his talks with the British Ambassador at Berlin. Ever since the war, whenever I have visited Germany, I have been assailed by people who asked me why my demand for justice for the Germans did not include the return of their colonies. My first answer was my opposition to any country's governing subject races. My second objection was to the harsh militaristic character of Germany's colonial administration. My third was that Germany did not get anything out of her colonies and that they were not population outlets.

This always brings a roar of dissent, but I have never found that one of my interrogators knew how many Germans were living in German colonies before the World War. The guesses ranged up to 500,000. Actually, as Mr. Peffer points out, there were only 24,000 Germans in the colonies, 22,000 of them in the 900,000 square miles of their African territory. Mr. Peffer also shows conclusively that possession of colonies no longer guarantees enjoyment of the economic perquisites thereof, for trade no longer follows the flag—Japan, as he points out, is getting the trade of England in India, the Malay Peninsula, and elsewhere. Again, he rightly stresses that "possession of a colony grants prior right but not monopoly. . . . Great Britain controls the rubber of Malaya, but it had to come to terms with American manufacturers." He does concede that expansion to secure access to raw materials "still has a certain validity. . . . Possession of a colony does give prior rights to such natural resources and at least yields a profit from their exploitation." But that is all the profit that the whole colonial business gives to conquerors and exploiters; "it does not solve the fundamental economic problems of a country." Even that profit can quickly disappear if there is charged against the colony the cost of administering and policing it and its share of the cost and maintenance of the cruisers and battleships needed to "protect" it in war time.

In the case of Italy and Ethiopia the situation is clear. There are no great supplies of raw materials in Ethiopia. There are indications of diamonds and gold, but not sufficient to warrant any serious exploration in search of them. There is no coal, no genuine sign of oil. Even if there were raw materials, the cost of getting them out would be prohibitive. The current jest that if there had been wealth in Ethiopia, England would have stolen it years ago is altogether justified. As to the boast of an Italian general on taking Adowa that there would be a million Italians settled there within ten years, that is absolutely absurd; there are only 4,283 Europeans in Eritrea, which has been Italian territory for fifty years. Japan stole Formosa, Korea, half of Sakhalin, and all southern Manchuria, but its overflowing population will not go to those territories, and despite all our alarmists they have gone to the Philippines in far smaller numbers than the Chinese, though there has been no bar to their entrance. People accustomed to one kind of climate are not eager to go to a different one, and farmers who would emigrate need capital, which farmers today do not have.

There is a bait for dictators in the man-power of colonies. Is not that one of the major objectives of Mussolini in Abyssinia? France would cling to its colonies for that reason even if they all put it deeply in the red. Press reports say that there are more French colonial troops garrisoned in France than ever before. The French armies would probably have collapsed early in 1917, or sooner, if it had not been for the colored troops and the Indo-Chinese work battalions. Today, with its falling man-power, France needs those colored troops more than ever, and I have seen apparently reliable statements that the government is steadily building up black reserves in Africa. Mussolini, as everyone knows, dreams of other than African conquests. What a help it would be if he could throw, in addition to his Askaris, let us say 300,000 well-trained Ethiopians on to a European battlefield! They could no more protest than can the French colonial troops, or could the hapless Indian troops in 1914 when England threw them into the holocaust that concerned them not at all. As long as war continues I fear we shall have the imperialist powers clinging to their colonies in order to squeeze out every black soldier that they can.

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BROUN'S PAGE

MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN. A picket line of twelve hundred men and women swung round the plant of Hearst's *Wisconsin News,* and a visiting guildsman from New York rubbed his eyes and said, "By golly, how we've grown!" He remembered little meetings of ten or twelve in New York less than three years ago, and as the marchers shouted, "Don't read the *Wisconsin News!*" he was reminded of the fact that in the beginning everybody had said, "Of course, we won't ever be able to strike. The best we can do is to persuade the publishers."

To be sure, the answer to that state of mind has already been given in Newark and in Harlem. But this time the struggle is on against a Hearst paper. Nobody can accuse the newspaper men and women any more of picking out the weaklings. Naturally only a small percentage of the encircling regiment around the *Wisconsin News* was made up of reporters, copy readers, or photographers. This was the voice of labor making common cause with a group somewhat inappropriately known as "white-collar" workers.

Mr. Hearst has said frequently that the essential quality in reporters is initiative. Certainly the newspaper men and women of the *Wisconsin News* have taken him at his word. Never before have reporters shown the same enterprise that they are displaying now in Milwaukee. Courage is an essential quality in any finder of facts. The boys and girls of the staff have displayed that in abundance. It was twenty below zero a few days ago, but the picket line was maintained. They had to do it in fifteen-minute shifts because the strikers are going to need their fingers and their ears when they get back on their jobs. Indeed, they need them now. In this fight for recognition the strikers are probably working as hard as they ever did in their lives. They have a world to gain, not only for themselves and other newspaper men and women, but for the craft itself. It would not be surprising if twenty years from now the *Wisconsin News* strike should be recognized as one of labor's truly decisive battles.

Of course it would be extremely useful to have that recognized right now. This is no private fight. This is a struggle for the right to organize and bargain collectively. It is being waged against William Randolph Hearst. Here is a chance for those who oppose Hearst labor policies to enlist for duration. I don't see how anybody can be neutral. Either you believe in the union movement or you think that hours and wages should be left wholly to the discretion and the bounty of the employer. Which side are you on? If you want to help the cause of organization—and I honestly think the guild has a right to say that it is battling for the labor movement in general—write to the American Newspaper Guild, 49 West Forty-fifth Street, New York. If this isn't Armageddon, it will do for the season of 1936 at any rate.

Nobody can or will make greater sacrifices than the strikers themselves. The seven o'clock picket shift came into headquarters an hour later. One of the girls was making the coffee. "You know," she said, "I think next week I'm going to ask for a few days on a later shift. Bobby's old enough now to dress himself, but I sort of hate to have him going off to school without his breakfast."

It seems to me that among other faults William Randolph Hearst isn't a very good business man. If you were running a paper what kind of staff would you want to have? Would you choose men and women who had the courage and the intelligence to organize as the Milwaukee Guild has done, or would you prefer a terrified staff afraid to speak its mind? Let's assume that this is one of those twenty-below-zero mornings. Which fellow seems to you the better material for newspaper work—the reporter with the sign "Join the Guild" who is going up stream against the wind, or the strike-breaker self-consciously darting into the nice warm office? A staff of courage and of confidence is essential to any successful paper. You can't put out anything of interest from a city room whose every inmate shudders at the sight of rat poison.

And as for the romance and glamor of the newspaper business, a guildsman from New York who has been familiar with other beverages tells me that undoubtedly the best drink of all is the coffee that you get at eight a. m. in strike headquarters after your spell on the picket line. And I saw another guildsman from New York who to my certain knowledge has not walked two hundred yards in the last twenty years marching one mile in the strike parade because at the end of the journey he would have "an opportunity to hear distinguished speakers." And it did thrill him to hear Mrs. Victor Berger call for a united front of all workers in Milwaukee in the struggle against the *News.*

I think it is a battle deserving the attention of the country. The newspapers print very little. Perhaps they feel it isn't news. Of course it isn't news if a Hearst executive cleans out a staff just to show that he has authority. It isn't news when Hearst or any other publisher fires a man or woman with scant notice or none at all after twenty years. It isn't news when the hard-won forty-hour, five-day week goes back to six days and an indefinite number of hours. But isn't it news when the guild says, "Hold on, Hearst, we don't like your salaries or your hours on this paper in Milwaukee"?

There stands a great castle at San Simeon and in it dwells a potentate, and when he speaks whoever is within the sound of his voice says, "Yes," or "Quite so," or "How right you are," or "I'll do it immediately." This has gone on for fifty years, and so it is news, and good news, too, that the men and women of the *Wisconsin News* have lifted up their voices and answered, "No. Not on your life. Not till our picket line freezes over."

HEYWOOD BROUN

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BOOKS *and the* ARTS

GATEWAY TO VEBLEN'S WORLD

BY MAX LERNER

WESLEY MITCHELL'S anthology of Veblen's writings* reminds us, if we needed to be reminded, that Veblen has already become a classic. In this Norskie farm boy who grew up to be a college professor America has produced its most considerable and most acid intelligence in the realm of social thought. In these lumbering six-syllabled sentences, with their devastating understatement and their poisonous indirections, America has produced a unique literary manner. In this man at once fierce and desperately shy, rooted in the soil like a giant in the earth and yet wandering nomadically from one university to another, turning his "swift wit and slow irony" on you so that you recoiled in fear, mumbling his lectures incoherently yet gathering disciples wherever he went—in this curious personality America has produced one of its complex and legendary figures. The five hundred pages selected from his twelve books and the definitive essay on Veblen by the editor constitute a gateway to Veblen's world.

What sort of world is it? Its outlines have the essential unity of any great theoretical system. It is a fluid unity however—not, like that of Marx or Kant or Herbert Spencer, one in which all the pieces fit, or can be made to fit, together, but rather a *Gestalt* that comes into being after you have soaked yourself in Veblen's writing and approached with him, by roughly the same paths, one problem after another. For there can be no doubt that Veblen is repetitious to the point of despair. He traverses and retraverses the same ground, from the "Theory of the Leisure Class" in 1899 to "Absentee Ownership" in 1923. In a sense the core of his entire body of thought can be found in his early essays and his first book. The rest was elaboration, sharpening, strengthening.

Partly this is to be accounted for by the fact that Veblen waited until he was forty before he wrote his first book. When he first flashed through the American heavens he was a meteor already fully formed, with all his strength and brilliance gathered and tightly knit. Partly also it is to be accounted for by the fact that Veblen lived so secluded a life that he was able to create an intellectual world with unmistakable features of its own. It has its own landscape, its own heaven and earth, its own seasonal moods, its own mythology and demonology. He buried himself in his reading and his brooding. He read the economists, the anthropologists, the socialists—and the nineteen-volume Report of the Industrial Commission. While Veblen knew America and seemed able to breathe a sense of America into his pores, he lived insulated against its passing fashions and follies. His greatest generalizations were brilliant intuitions or uncompromising deductions from daring premises. The unity that his thought has is a unity not so much of structure as of mood and method.

Since Veblen does not have a "system," the body of his thought defies any easy analysis. The key idea is generally held to be the antithesis Veblen finds between industry and business—the one concerned with satisfying human needs, the other with creating artificial pecuniary values. Industry is with Veblen a continuing evolutionary process, starting with the savage state of the industrial arts and coming to its present climax in the modern machine technology. Business is the art of getting something for nothing—also an evolutionary process, starting with the predatory barbarism that followed the peaceful savage state and ending with present-day corporation finance and the techniques of the holding company. Industry and business are the economic forces operating in a psychological medium—in a world of instinct and habit. The deep unrests in our life now arise from the fact that the habituations of the industrial process, based on the instinct of workmanship and the parental bent, are moving ever farther away from the "idiot" institutions of our society maintained by the vested interests. When the gap has become so great that it has strained the limits of tolerance of the engineers and the workers, we may expect a change. Meanwhile there is still a considerable social lag which limits "the prospects of an overturn."

Thus, despite Veblen's delvings into neolithic times and his wanderings in the morass of instinct psychology, there is a Veblen who has meaning for today. To vary somewhat the title of one of Joseph Wood Krutch's essays: he belongs to the present. And he belongs to the present for the reason that he has so searchingly explored the past and analyzed the economic and psychological roots of our modern being. I have pointed out elsewhere that there are two Veblens rather than one. There is Veblen the liberal, with his fetish of disinterestedness, his awareness of his own preconceptions, his lingering irony, his Olympian detachment from the real struggles of a real America. This is the Veblen who offered, and still offers, consolation to those unwilling to take sides in the planetary turmoil of an era of finance capitalism, yet anxious to liberate themselves from the values of a leisure-class society. There is also the second and more revolutionary Veblen, implicit in the first from the very beginning, yet emerging with ever greater clarity after the outbreak of the war and the coming of peace. This was the Veblen who began to think in terms of the collapse of a decaying world and the seizure of a power. My only quarrel, if I have one, with Mr.

*"What Veblen Taught." Edited by Wesley C. Mitchell. The Viking Press. $3.

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Mitchell's anthology is that he overvalues the interest that the earlier Veblen—especially Veblen the destroyer of the idols of classical and hedonist economics—has for us, and undervalues the real interest of our generation in Veblen the revolutionary thinker.

Apply Veblen to the issues that confront us today and you get some notion of his continuing vitality even for a world that is no longer agitated by Darwin and Spencer. In a sense Veblen was part of the movement of populist thought in the first decade of this century and therefore part of the progressive tradition in America. Yet in a curious way he seems completely out of place amid the writings of the progressive era, at once strident and indecisive. By the same token his approach to the problems of this generation would be quite different from that of the other progressives and radicals. He would not so much rail at the patrioteers and the Liberty League as calmly destroy them by detached analysis of how closely their mental temper corresponds to that of dementia praecox. He would seek the roots of fascism not only in the immediate struggle for power but more searchingly in the entire history of the predatory barbarian tradition. He would understand why it is that middle-class patterns of ideas still linger sufficiently in the minds even of our workmen to make a united labor party a thing of long-run rather than of immediate concern, and he would stress the peculiar need for an alliance between the workers and the technicians. On the issue of neutrality and the war he would get away from the Nye hearings sufficiently to analyze the character of the dynastic state under capitalism and its compelling urge toward war. And when he came to the Supreme Court he would probably analyze it not so much as a judicial agency as in terms of its economic utility or wastefulness, much as he did in his unparalleled economic evaluation of the churches, which may be found in a long footnote in "Absentee Ownership." I am sorry that Mr. Mitchell did not find a place for this passage, which represents Veblen at his maddest and best.

None the less, most of the famous Veblen passages are in this book, and one comes upon them with a delight that can be explained only by the fact that Veblen is stylist as well as thinker. You will often have someone come up to you in an exasperated sort of way and ask why it is that Veblen is so unintelligible. The answer is that he is not. The manner of his writing is one that was beautifully calculated to achieve the purpose of his thought. He has, to be sure, a vocabulary of his own, but it is not merely an erratic vocabulary. Such phrases as "conspicuous waste," "absentee ownership," "vested interests," "leisure class," "invidious distinction," "calculable future," have worked themselves into the texture of our own vocabulary in a way that shows the enduring appeal of Veblen's writing. He had to create a new style because he was dealing with a range of ideas which completely cut under the prevailing range of ideas in America. The important thing about his style is that his entire intellectual method, with its satire and its detachment and its indirection, is implicit in it. Any anthology of American prose in the future and any history of American literature will ignore Veblen at its peril.

BOOKS

Actors, Apologists, and a Critic

THE HOOVER ADMINISTRATION: A DOCUMENTED NARRATIVE. By William Starr Myers and Walter H. Newton. Charles Scribner's Sons. $3.50.

LIBERALISM FIGHTS ON. By Odgen L. Mills. The Macmillan Company. $1.50.

THE RAINBOW. By Donald R. Richberg. Doubleday, Doran and Company. $2.50.

INTERPRETATIONS: 1933-1935. By Walter Lippmann. Edited by Allan Nevins. The Macmillan Company. $2.50.

IN A famous passage Lord Macaulay declared that "almost every intellectual employment has a tendency to produce some intellectual malady. Biographers, translators, editors—all, in short, who employ themselves in illustrating the lives or the writings of others—are peculiarly exposed to the *Lues Boswelliana,* or disease of admiration." Macaulay was talking about a biographer whose subject was dead. Apparently the disease can be more virulent when the apologist has known a public man and has been spoken to kindly by him. This may explain but it certainly does not excuse the volume which bears the names of Mr. Myers (Princeton professor of politics) and Mr. Newton (former member of Congress and secretary to President Hoover).

So far as content and contentment go, the volume could bear the imprint of Mr. Hoover's pre-convention campaign committee. The thesis is that "almost wholly through the battles fought by President Hoover and his associates" the country successfuly weathered five economic crises. The first was the result of the stock-market crash of the autumn of 1929 (not, be it noted, that the stock-market crash was rather itself a "result"). The second crisis was caused by the central European banking situation of June, 1931; the third was England's abandonment of the gold standard in September of that year; the fourth was the withdrawal of gold from the United States in February, 1932; and the fifth was "the breakdown of public confidence due to obstruction in Congress in June, 1932." The country was "five times turned back from" these crises Recovery was under way, but it stopped with the election of November, 1932, because of fears of "a prospective change in politics and especially of a prospective devaluation of the dollar." Then came "the actual panic in February, 1933, brought about by the collapse of the banks, which certainly was caused in large part by the approach of the New Deal." Since the authors stop with Mr. Hoover's departure from the White House, they are not compelled to explain the remarkable rehabilitation of public confidence which synchronized with the measures that the new Administration took to implement its "new deal," and they apparently are not aware of or decided to ignore the resulting havoc to their logic.

Such an argument is not worth traversing. Hence the book will be useful chiefly as an accessible repository of certain documents and as furnishing a running account of Mr. Hoover's activities during his Administration. But what can one think of a work which purports to deal with this Administration and which contains only two references to the Hawley-Smoot tariff, both in Presidential speeches that are reprinted? Another example of omission is the account of the President-elect's unwillingness to cooperate with Mr. Hoover on war

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debts during the interregnum between election and inauguration. That is criticized, but there is no suggestion that President Hoover invited coolness by publishing his *motivé* telegram of invitation. The jittery feeling with which Mr. Roosevelt and his advisers approached the conference may have been unjustified—there was no possible way that the repudiated President could put them at a political disadvantage—but the fact nevertheless is that the then occupant of the White House was as much to blame for the failure to collaborate as the then occupant of the Executive Mansion at Albany.

The past concerns Ogden Mills much less than does the future. In titling his book he labels himself a "liberal" and thus will make readers who have similarly thought of themselves wonder whether they must not move to the left. Although he may be a new convert, Mr. Mills is faithful to one liberal tenet—he is always vague. His "liberalism" makes him a believer in "free government, free enterprise, and free men." The people and not the state must be sovereign. Free enterprise means that "the government lays down the rules and acts as umpire" for the competitive capitalist system, "but does not enter the game or direct the play." Mr. Mills does not quarrel "with the professed aims of the New Dealers." Everyone would "like to do away with injustice . . . and to provide a more abundant life for all." Rarely does Mr. Mills become concrete. He believes that "a wide distribution of property is the greatest safeguard of a free society," but he does not hint at a tax program or any other device to realize his ideal. "Liberalism fights on" but doesn't know where it is going.

A liberal of long standing is probably the way Mr. Richberg thinks of himself. He has been the principal office-holder of the present Administration, and he has written a *pièce justificative* which does little more than prove, unnecessarily, that Mr. Richberg is a pleasant gentleman. Urbanity has its uses. But in this book urbanity becomes namby-pambyness. Mr. Richberg, who has had wider experience than anyone else in this Administration, is so polite and reticent that he tells no story. The colors of his book are as faint as they are in most rainbows. He is most detailed in his discussion of the labor section—7-a—of the Recovery Act, but even here, though Mr. Richberg was its principal draftsman, there is still some doubt as to what the provision was intended to mean. The most clear-cut opinion of the book is that unless the government is prepared to empower its labor boards to go the whole distance, it had better confine their powers to those of mediation and conciliation. Mr. Richberg accepts some of the responsibility for the decision to delay a test of the constitutionality of the statute, but ignores its tragic unwisdom. The "problem of building up the legal division" of the National Recovery Administration is described as "a secondary obligation." That, clearly, was one of the reasons why the National Recovery Administration came the cropper that it did, and the reason was unrelieved by the fact that while Mr. Richberg devoted his energies to non-legal matters, the second in command and some of his associates were able lawyers.

It is probably no longer true that Walter Lippmann is the indispensable matutinal companion of the clubwoman's coffee, but he is still our most widely read journalistic expositor of public questions. In three years he wrote five hundred pieces. Allan Nevins has selected, abbreviated, and topically arranged one hundred and fifty of them. The result is an absence of the tergiversations sometimes commented on by his daily readers and further evidence of Mr. Lippmann's flair for the calm and felicitous explanation of the issues underlying public questions. Not the least interesting aspect of the collection is the index which it offers of the tremendous range of the Roosevelt experiments. They have come so thick and fast that the trees have obscured the woods. That, it would appear, has been the case for some of those who in the Administration have excogitated and implemented policy. For those outside the Administration the sweep has been so rapid that before critics have had time adequately to consider a matter in relation to what has preceded or is likely to follow it, some new and seemingly more important problem clamors for attention. These "interpretations" will be useful for those who wish to reorientate themselves.

LINDSAY ROGERS

God Wot

NO VILLAIN NEED BE. By Vardis Fisher. Doubleday, Doran and Company and The Caxton Printers, Caldwell, Idaho. $2.50.

THIS is the end of Mr. Fisher's tetralogy, all four members of which bear titles taken from five lines by George Meredith:

> 'Tis morning: but no morning can restore
> What we have forfeited. I see no sin:
> The wrong is mixed. In tragic life, God wot,
> No villain need be! Passions spin the plot:
> We are betrayed by what is false within.

"In Tragic Life" started the hero, Vridar Hunter, on his highly neurotic career as a boy in primitive Idaho; "Passions Spin the Plot" took him part way through college and through his marriage to Neloa Doole; "We Are Betrayed" carried the painful tale of their relationship to its logical conclusion in her suicide at Chicago; and now "No Villain Need Be" shows Vridar trying to understand himself in Chicago, in Baltimore, in New York, in Europe, and finally in Idaho again. We are left with implications that Vridar has succeeded in understanding himself and that he is therefore equipped to write the one "honest" novel ever written. That novel, presumably, is "In Tragic Life"; for Vridar Hunter is none other than Vardis Fisher, who like Proust has told in a series of volumes how he got ready to write the first one, and who like no one but himself is haunted by the notion that novels are good in proportion as they respond to his personal cries for the truth—the whole truth, and nothing more.

The whole truth, judging by the way Mr. Fisher's tetralogy has run steadily and disastrously downhill, is not enough, and perhaps it is not what we want at all. Mr. Fisher, if he is as much like Mr. Hunter as I take him to be, would snort at this and demand who "we" are; whether, for instance, we aren't the whole caboodle of festering hypocrites who poison earth's air with our pitiful, evasive lies. But it is very simple. We are the people who want the novels we read to be as good as possible, and who have discovered how much truth there is in the almost forgotten definition of a good story-teller as a good liar. He is at any rate, we think, an artist of some kind, and as an artist he must long ago have learned a certain lesson, namely, that the depths he would explore lie neither in himself nor in his story but in the two of them together—each respectful of the other because neither can live alone. Mr. Fisher has obviously thought a great deal about himself, but he has thought too little about himself as an artist. He has been too proud to study the distinction between veracity and verity, between honesty and truth; or, in technical language, between autobiography and fiction.

The autobiographical novel is never good when it signs

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itself as such. As soon as we perceive that its reference is to something outside itself, something which, whether confessed or unconfessed, cannot be explained because it is the author's own mind and life, we cease to credit what we read. Someone is speaking who has no right to speak, and he is so far from telling the story's truth as merely to be expressing himself. His private voice, however honest it may be, sounds thin and false after those tones which art manages at its best or even at its second best to utter. Art is the voice of life; which is another way of saying that Mr. Fisher has had less to tell us as he has staggered nearer to the present stage of his existence. Vridar's stout consciousness that the book he is to write will speak the whole truth about Vridar is a warning of the literary weakness to come. The old saying that an author writes best about himself needs to be accompanied by one important qualification: he had better not know that he does, or if he knows, he had better try not to. Somerset Maugham, who in "Of Human Bondage" wrote an autobiographical novel without letting it be felt as such, has suffered in his later books from a too great success at self-suppression. His stories now need him as badly as Mr. Fisher needs a story. Mr. Fisher like Thomas Wolfe has been falling headlong ever since he got away from that portion of his childhood which makes the best because the most imaginative portion of any autobiography. The tragic fact about both authors is that they have only themselves to blame. No villain need be, God wot; but there he stands anyway, and he is dressed in self-pity.

I have neglected to say how beautiful and powerful "In Tragic Life" was and is, and how terrible in its unremitting analysis of a boy's most secret agonies. The next two novels, though they lost something as we realized their narrower nature, still held up because of Neloa's presence in them. Not only was she interesting in herself; by her resistance to Vridar she objectified him and lent him outline. Without her in this fourth book, and with a successor, Athene, who is unable to preserve the outline, he goes quite literally to pieces. Mr. Fisher believes that Vridar finds himself because he arrives at certain conclusions which are in agreement with his own. The fact that these must be stated, however, in letters to friends, in long New York conversations, and in a European travel journal is the clearest sign that the character for whom they might have been true has ceased to exist. He was lost in Mr. Fisher.

MARK VAN DOREN

"Creature of Air and Flame"

VOLTAIRE. By Henry Noel Brailsford. Henry Holt and Company. $1.25.

THIS latest study of Voltaire, from the pen of Henry Noel Brailsford, is a sketch of the life of the *philosophe* written in Mr. Brailsford's best manner: it has charm of style, critical insight, and, above all, a full understanding of the liberal temper that was Voltaire. Though brief, the book gives a fairly adequate idea of Voltaire as "an event" in human history, and admirably fulfils the purpose of the Home University Library.

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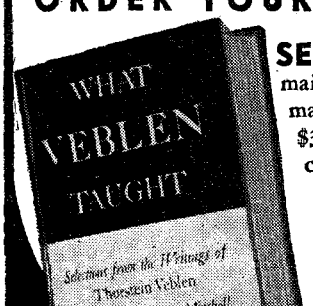

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taire was no mere literary man. To the great problems of his day he brought, not a philosophic system of formulas and doctrines, but an attitude of mind which, he believed, would ultimately solve the problems of mankind. And this attitude may be best described by the word "toleration." However, like Voltaire's "simple" style, his simple solution was the outcome of a sophistication that plumbed the very depth of worldly wisdom, and of a passionate love of mankind that overflowed the boundaries of race, of faith, of opinion, of class, and of sex.

What was "toleration"? Behind that word was an interpretation of society and a philosophy of human nature that was distinctively Voltairean. Despite his frequent cynicism Voltaire was convinced that human nature was essentially good and kind. He declared that nature gave to man "no more weapons than she gave to pigeons and to rabbits"; and that man becomes wicked only "as he becomes sick." His explanation of the glaring contradiction between an evil society and the essential goodness of human nature was that, from the very dawn of history, man has been bewitched by an evil spirit, revealed religion. As a consequence man's natural goodness and common sense were atrophied, and he became a helpless tool of designing men who profited from the evil system. As long as people believed in absurdities, Voltaire maintained, they would always be moved to commit outrages.

Toleration alone would destroy such absurdities. In the religious field it would permit competing sects and faiths. It would permit free-thinkers to make successful raids on the faithful, thereby lessening the numbers and influence of the latter. In the secular field toleration would establish freedom of speech, from which would flow the countless blessings of increase of knowledge and greater enlightenment. Toleration would destroy political tyranny either through parliamentary opposition or through an enlightened monarch. It would promote prosperity by abolishing restrictions on labor and capital imposed by monopolies.

In the war for toleration Voltaire devised a new weapon which he wielded with such terrific effect that his opponents were left mute and helpless. And this new weapon was "satire of sincerity." The troubles of the world are due not only to the wicked but even more to those sincere, honest people who are so fanatical in their beliefs that they are willing to go to any length to carry them out. Hypocrites are not nearly so dangerous as fanatics. The former may be brought over to the "side of the angels" by appeals to self-interest, but fanatics are beyond reason, beyond fear, beyond self-interest, beyond mercy. From time immemorial satirists had used ridicule to expose hypocrisy, implying that if people were only sincere in their professions and honest in their conduct all would be well. This was the method of the two great satirists who preceded Voltaire, Molière and Erasmus. Voltaire's method was to admit fully the sincerity and good faith of his opponents, and then pour ridicule on what they believed. The atrocities related by Candide are committed by sincere men acting from secular as well as from religious motives, by Bulgarian patriots and English admirals no less than by Portuguese Inquisitors and Turkish Mohammedans.

The style of Voltaire was marvelously fashioned to suit its chief function of being a weapon of attack against the social order. The reader smiles his way through pages of airy, sparkling narrative and cynical comment, quite unaware that the author has any object other than to amuse him. Then he becomes aware that something is burning inside of him, and before long he is aflame with indignation at the senseless cruelty of man's inhumanity to man. A sentence, a phrase cunningly inserted in a smiling paragraph, or a home thrust given at the end of a tale insinuates the terrible implication that the real trouble is not that this man is a fool and that one a knave, but that the entire social order is a conspiracy against reason and humanity. The tale in "Candide" of a Negro slave in Surinam is a good illustration of Voltaire's method. The slave lacked a left leg and right hand. He explains to Candide how he came to be crippled in this manner. "If we should chance to have one of our fingers caught in the machinery of the sugar factory in which we work they cut off our hand; if we attempt to escape, they cut off one of our legs; and I was unlucky enough to be guilty of both of these offenses." And then comes the home thrust. "This is the price at which you eat sugar in Europe."

This "creature of air and flame," as Taine characterized Voltaire, captured the imagination of Europe as no literary man had done before him or has since. However, once the battle for religious toleration and intellectual freedom was won, Voltaire became a tradition instead of a battle cry.

The appearance of Mr. Brailsford's book is no accident. It is one of a number of books which have recently appeared on the *philosophes* of the eighteenth century, indicating a revival of interest in the origins of liberalism. And the reason is not far to seek. Many are listening intently to the maddening beat of the tom-tom of political fanaticism, which in some lands has already drowned out the silvery laughter of the mind.

J. Salwyn Schapiro

Minority Report

IN DUBIOUS BATTLE. By John Steinbeck. Covici-Friede. $2.50.

THE surface action of John Steinbeck's new book, which has already been acclaimed as a topnotch proletarian novel, moves about a strike in the California apple-picking country. A group of itinerant workers, dispirited and disorganized, are bullied, cajoled, and harangued by two Communist organizers into a sort of solidarity which enables them to fight a bitter battle for better wages and better conditions. The incidents of the strike are, of course, dramatic: murder, kidnapping, and arson scar its progress. Nevertheless, the novel which Mr. Steinbeck has woven about the events in Torgas Valley is, in an odd way, academic, wooden, inert. Mr. Steinbeck's novel is no strike drama but a kind of interior monologue on the part of the author about the technique of strikes in general. This interior monologue is not presented brazenly as such; rather, it is couched in the form of a Socratic dialogue between the two organizers—Mac, the elder, seasoned in party work, and Jim, the green recruit to the Communist Party, who is being initiated into its methods. Other characters join the conversation with occasional observations of their own; of these, London, the itinerant worker, the natural leader of men, and Dr. Burton, the philosophic, disillusioned observer of men, have the most to say. Almost the whole novel is in dialogue form. The dramatic events, the small, separate climaxes of the strike, take place for the most part off stage, and are reported to the conversationalists, as in the Greek drama, by a breathless observer.

It is quite possible that a successful proletarian novel could be written according to this classic scheme; but I submit, in this minority report, that Mr. Steinbeck was not the man to write it. If a revolutionary general with a talent for prose—say Trotzky—had cast his reflections upon the technique of class warfare into the form of a novel, though they would fall more

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naturally, as did Caesar's, into the form of a memoir, the results might have been exciting. Caesar—and doubtless Trotzky—had something to say about the curious and wonderful behavior of embattled human beings; Mr. Steinbeck, for all his long and frequently pompous verbal exchanges, offers only a few, rather childish, often reiterated generalizations.

Mr. Steinbeck may be a natural story-teller; but he is certainly no philosopher, sociologist, or strike tactician. Mr. Steinbeck, for instance, is interested in crowds. Men in a crowd, he declares over and over again, behave differently from men by themselves. How a crowd is different, why a crowd is different, he cannot say; he is content to assert at great length that a crowd likes the sight of a little blood, that a crowd is certainly different, and no more. That the legitimately dramatic incidents of the strike should be subordinated to such infantile verbalizations is unfortunate. The reader who is not allowed to see the vigilantes burning a barn or the kidnapping of Doc Burton, and who is not given adequate, intellectual compensation for the loss, has every right to be annoyed. In several unpretentious scenes Mr. Steinbeck shows how well he can report the behavior of men dealing with simple, material things. His picture of two men eating hamburgers, for example, gives a suggestion of what this strike novel might have been like had he confined himself to the facts and restrained himself from ponderous comment upon them. For the most part, however, the author and his characters remind one of those tedious persons who in the theater indefatigably chat through the climaxes of the play, and whose vocal efforts have nothing to recommend them but their loudness. MARY MC CARTHY

Shorter Notices

THE BALCONY. By Adrian Bell. Simon and Schuster. $2.50.

A certain similarity of purpose has helped to link the name of Proust with this bemused little memoir, but Mr. Bell is not likely to benefit by such a comparison. It is clear that Mr. Bell has derived from Proust something more palpable than delight alone, and that, after a fashion, he too is concerned with the mystery that follows in the path of the dipped madeleine. However, it becomes a little absurd to impose Proustian touchstones upon a chronicle dedicated so obviously to trance and nostalgia rather than an integrated analysis of "things past." "The Balcony" is poeticized autobiography, with perhaps equal parts of poetry and autobiography. The fact that it confines itself to childhood alone may in itself be sufficient to suggest the mood of unhurried retrospect in which it is conceived and the andante temper of the writing as a whole. Mr. Bell leaves little to be desired in the way of stylistic ingratiation; but he hews to the turn of a phrase rather than the line of an idea, and in so doing is as likely as not to substitute rhapsody for experience. It is often difficult to trace the growing human lineaments beneath the façade of rhetoric. Moreover, his similes are at times touched by a preciosity not only enfeebling in itself but false to the child mind as well. When, for example, we find the young child likening the movement of a swan to a "melody through the vibrations of music," we are inclined to suspect Mr. Bell of a confusion of focus here. With less sophistication of ornament, he would have achieved a more credible compromise: his first snowfall, with the countryside "iced like a party-cake," and his grown-ups, "all stiff with clothes," are exactly as they should be, and instantaneously clear. Their rightness derives from the fact that they are literal transcriptions of phenomena—and this is not an unction to be laid to the book as a whole.

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BLACK MAN'S VERSE. By Frank Marshall Davis. Chicago: The Black Cat Press. $3.

Kansas born, Mr. Davis brings a Western note to Negro expression in his first volume of verse. With little of the melancholy of his race, little influenced by the mood or style of the spiritual, Mr. Davis accepts the raw vigor of his environment and responds to its casual aspects of beauty in a free-running verse that has something of the hard brightness of Sandberg. Yet a more complicated feeling enters as the book progresses, and the last poem is ironically aware of the many pitfalls awaiting a Negro poet in a white civilization. It tells the history of one Roosevelt Smith, "the only dusky child born and bred in Pine City, Nebraska."

> At college they worshiped the novelty of a black poet and predicted fame

But Roosevelt listened too conscientiously to the critics as his successive books appeared. Told that he wasn't using his racial material, he took up darky dialect. Told then that he sentimentalized the Negro, he went sophisticated. Told that sophistication was inappropriate to a Negro, he tried for classic simplicity. Told again that he was being only a black-faced white, he went to Africa. When the critics could make nothing of the resulting book, "since it followed nothing done by any white poet," Roosevelt

> traded conscience and critics for the leather pouch and bunions of a mail carrier and read in the papers until his death how little the American Negro had contributed to his nation's literature . . .

This book suggests a different fate for Mr. Davis.

COSMOPOLITANS. By W. Somerset Maugham. Doubleday, Doran and Company. $2.50.

There was nothing to prevent Mr. Maugham from publishing these ten-cent tales in the *Cosmopolitan* between 1924 and 1929, but his better judgment might have told him not to bother with them now. Far from adding to a reputation already endangered by the existence of so many trifles, this volume sinks it to a new low. Mr. Maugham begins with a preface in which he defends his right to be merely "entertaining," and snaps rather suspiciously at those of his contemporaries who are so thick-witted as to think before they write. The stories which follow are the perfect answer, for they are not even entertaining. Mr. Maugham should remember that there is nothing so entertaining as the use of the mind, and that there is no such thing as a "mere" story.

THE BEDSIDE BOOK OF FAMOUS AMERICAN STORIES. Edited by Angus Burrell and Bennett A. Cerf. Random House. $3.

More than half of the stories in this very handsome volume were written in the present century, and all but seven of them since the Civil War. This makes Hemingway equal to Hawthorne and gives the whole picture a brightly modern hue, as is perhaps proper. At any rate it is the editors' business to preserve what proportions they please, and they have been candid about their reasons in a preface which declares for "truth" and "tempo" in the short story. What truth is another generation may decide in its own jesting way; and as for tempo, one can imagine posterity complaining that the narratives of Conrad Aiken and William Saroyan stand absolutely still. At present, however, they do move, as do the contents of the volume as a whole. It is one of the most interesting collections of its kind, and incidentally an admirable introduction to the contemporary American short story.

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DRAMA

Empire Goods

"LOVE ON THE DOLE" (Shubert Theater) has been extremely popular in its native England, but unless I am a much worse prophet than I think I am it will not find equal favor in American eyes. Upon such matters as these we generally agree with London much better than we used to. Masterpieces are transported without great danger, and "Call It a Day" is a striking example of the popular play which is just as acceptable on one side of the Atlantic as on the other. But just as the English still find a certain variety of American exuberance rather more than they can bear, so we still wonder that they can be as patient as they are with a kind of mild, musty sentiment which seems dull and fatuous to us.

I have not, goodness knows, been oversympathetic to the more obstreperously revolutionary of our native dramas. But though it is a bitter choice to make, fairness compels me to say that I can find more excuse for even the lesser of our Marxian melodramas than for the tepid brew being served at the Shubert. The title is topical. Obviously the intention is to suggest a sociological study of some kind, and it is true that there are various references to the dole as well as to other aspects of life as it is led close to the edge of starvation. But the whole mood of the piece is hardly more than the mood of conventional sentiment. The principal characters are romantically prettified and the subsidiary ones treated as quaint after the manner of the nineteenth-century local-colorists. Even the machinery of the play does not turn about its true center, and the catastrophe, instead of being brought about by any factor in the situation supposedly under discussion, is precipitated by one of the stalest of melodramatic devices: our hero loses his job because the girl whom he loves has spurned the dishonorable advances of a fat man with influence. Wendy Hiller, the girl in question, is extremely pretty and extremely engaging. I suspect that she is also a very capable actress, but she fits the kind of play the authors have written rather better than the situation with which they are supposed to deal. Despite a very satisfactory accent, she suggests a young girl in fancy dress rather more than she suggests the slums of Manchester. Even the fetching disarray of her hair is such as only a skilful coiffeur could achieve.

"Mainly for Lovers" (Forty-eighth Street Theater) is no less conventional in its own far more frivolous way, but at least there is nothing offensive about an artificial cemedy which is rather more than usually artificial and familiar. Besides, the second act at least is made genuinely funny by the delightful performance of Dorothy Gish as a wife who generally bites her husband during a thunder storm. Miss Gish has a certain delightful style of outrageous humor all her own. She can descend from decorous comedy into a special sort of slapstick with amazingly graceful abandon, and it is a great pity that she has never really had a play exactly suited to her talents.

As to the present one, it is concerned with a divorced wife who is anxious to prevent her sister from entering upon a trial marriage with a gentleman of not too robust an intelligence. Since she is convinced that the said sister is merely frightened by the spectacle of her own disastrous marriage, she forces the ex-husband to pretend that all has been made up between them. Naturally the husband falls in love—but stop me if you have heard this one before.

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

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RECORDS

THE recent release by Columbia of Beethoven's Emperor concerto played by Walter Gieseking and the Vienna Philharmonic under Bruno Walter (five records—$7.50) affords pianists an opportunity for comparative study. Arthur Schnabel and the London Symphony under Malcom Sargent (five records—$10) and, less recently, Wilhelm Bachaus and the Royal Albert Hall Orchestra (four records—$8) have recorded the same concerto for Victor. A choice between the Gieseking and Schnabel recordings must be largely a matter of personal taste. The former takes one less side than the Schnabel, a fact partly accounted for by Schnabel's slower tempi in the adagio and in part of the first movement. The melodic line, as a result, tends to come out more clearly with Gieseking, for the percussive quality of the piano is usually more obvious on records than it is in the concert hall. Furthermore, the orchestra under Bruno Walter, especially the string section, plays with greater precision of attack. On the side of the Victor publication it must be noted on the other hand that Schnabel phrases with more deliberate clarity—notice, for example, the opening arpeggio passages—and that both piano and orchestra are reproduced with greater faithfulness.

Together with Beethoven's Emperor concerto, Columbia lists Haydn's Emperor quartet played by the popular Lener String Quartet (four records—$6.50). The Leners' freshness and vigor of attack are well represented in this performance, especially in the first and last movements. The hackneyed variations of the old Austrian national anthem that constitute the second movement are set forth with a beautiful balance not always present in the playing of this movement by the Elman String Quartet, released by Victor some years ago (one record—$2). Do not overlook the last side, which is the Andante from Haydn's Opus 76, No. 2, the "Fifths" quartet. It is both the best-played and the best-recorded part of the set.

For brilliant string-quartet playing and recording, listen to Victor's recent release of Villa-Lobos's Brazilian quartet No. 5 played by the Carioca String Quartet (two records—$3). It is particularly recommended if you are one of those to whom the modern idiom is incomprehensible or if you have friends to educate. In it you will find such characteristic devices of the idiom as bitonality, two meters used simultaneously, abrupt rhythmical changes, dissonances, jazzy syncopations, and blatant parallel fifths. Yet it is all easy to understand, especially as the movements end on comfortable tonics, and there are even such familiar sentimentalities as tunes played in tenths. Señor Villa-Lobos, himself an experienced quartet player, knows the potentialities of strings and makes liberal use of eccentric effects—natural and artificial harmonics, pizzicato, spiccato, glissando, sul punto. The result is vastly entertaining—a performance that requires the services of four virtuosi, music that explores the borders of modern compositional and technical developments, and withal music familiar enough for you to feel at home in it.

And while we are on chamber music, let me recommend to your attention Columbia's release of Monteclair's music from "Les Plaisirs Champêtres" played by the Société Henri Casadesus des Instruments Anciens (two records—$3). Two records of this archaic sweetness and grace are probably all you will want to hear; but some day these fine artists may let us have the music of Jean-Baptiste Loeilliet, a later composer who wrote not only with charm but also with deep musical feeling.

HENRY SIMON

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Joseph Wood Krutch says:

BOY MEETS GIRL. Cort Theater. Rough and ready satire on Hollywood, but probably the funniest thing of its kind since "Once in a Lifetime."

CALL IT A DAY. Morosco Theater. Gay and delightful comedy about what almost happened to an English family on the first dangerous day of spring.

DEAD END. Belasco Theater. A play about gangsters in the making on an East River waterfront. More a good show than a great drama, but a very good show indeed.

END OF SUMMER. Guild Theater. The wittiest of American playwrights sets a group of interesting people to talking about the world as we find it. Ina Claire and Osgood Perkins help make a very happy evening.

ETHAN FROME. National Theater. The apparently impossible task of dramatization of Edith Wharton's novel achieved with conspicuous success. Outstanding performances by Pauline Lord, Ruth Gordon, and Raymond Massey.

LIBEL. Henry Miller Theater. Exciting English courtroom play. Surprisingly probable for this sort of thing and superbly acted.

PRIDE AND PREJUDICE. Plymouth Theater. Amazingly successful adaptation, brilliantly staged and acted. A thoroughly delightful evening in the theater.

VICTORIA REGINA. Broadhurst Theater. Delightful series of scenes from Laurence Housman's drama stunningly acted by Helen Hayes and others. Fairer to the matron queen than Strachey but funny nevertheless and charming besides.

Mark Van Doren says:

AH, WILDERNESS. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. Eugene O'Neill's touching and searching comedy of high-school days translated into a film which charms by its own right. Full of recognitions for the middle-aged.

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ANNIE OAKLEY. R.K.O. A minor American masterpiece based on the life of Buffalo Bill's best-loved sharpshooter. Barbara Stanwyck as Annie Oakley divides the honors with Sitting Bull.

MODERN TIMES. Charles Chaplin. Charlie Chaplin returns to the screen disguised as his old self and fulfils every expectation. Should be seen by everyone—and heard, for he has sound effects.

MUTINY ON THE BOUNTY. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. A long and noisy film, elaborated tirelessly from the famous books by Nordhoff and Hall; but distinguished by the great acting of Charles Laughton as Captain Bligh.

THE GHOST GOES WEST. Alexander Korda. René Clair's first film in English, with scenes in Scotland and the United States. Clever, satirical, and fanciful, but without the master touch.

WAY DOWN EAST. Fox. D. W. Griffith told the story better and more simply, but it remains a good story for movie purposes, and pictorially this version is very fine.

THE *Nation*

ANNOUNCES FOR EARLY PUBLICATION . . .

The Supreme Court

In a forthcoming article Charles A. Beard who has been in the thick of the constitutional fight since 1912 admits he is "a hard-boiled old sinner" on constitutional matters and differs from most of the attitudes on the court expressed thus far. He views the court and the problem of constitutional amendment from the long perspective of history and makes a plea "for all parties to the dispute to wait a while." On the other hand Max Lerner, in the last article of his series on The Riddle of the Supreme Court, reviews the various proposals that have been advanced for dealing with the court and concludes that the drastic curbing of the judicial power is the most important issue before the country.

Can LaGuardia Be Re-Elected?

Politically, New York votes Democratic. To say that free-lance Mayor LaGuardia can be re-elected in 1937 means that he will poll enough Democratic votes to defeat the Democratic candidate. But none of New York's four previous reform Mayors has defeated Tammany the second time. *Can LaGuardia?* George Britt believes he can and tells why in an informative article which involves Tammany, Farley, the Governorship of New York and the Presidential election.

Murder and Karl Marx

The mystery story has traveled a long way since the early 1920's when a wealthy English gentleman was found dead in his study, all the doors and windows locked, and the fatal weapon missing! Mary MacCarthy, who collaborated with Margaret Marshall in the controversial series on Our Literary Critics, traces trends to the currently popular class-conscious mystery story and discusses implications.

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Letters to the Editors

A CASE FOR TEARS

Dear Sirs: What of Germany today? True to her ancient disposition she squabbles, squabbles, squabbles. With a million enemies thundering at the gates she must perforce exercise her time-honored prerogative—and squabble! The dregs of forty-six parties suppressed by Hitler are splitting hairs in 10,000 beer cellars. Horn in on three Germans talking, gesticulating wildly, and you may hear four arguments. Of course, we have the underground movement which *The Nation* dotes on with the sublime regard of a baboon for its offspring. In Germany there is always an underground movement. Let the Messiah and all his angels reign in Potsdam and there would still be an underground movement; millions of rats scuttling in their holes. Should the Nazis go under and the rats come out of their holes and take charge, do you think for a moment that the essential grievances of Germany—lack of colonies, of money and markets, of resources, of ground, of a thousand things—would be liquidated by the whimsical fiats of Marxism?

Then, too, we have the ironic spectacle of Catholics uniting with Communists in a solid front against the civilizing efforts of Hitler. The Catholics, by the way, esteem the most ghastly rot as eternal truth. They are against birth control; their ideal is a dozen bawling brats around every garbage can in Christendom. They are against sterilization of the unfit—a bumper crop of idiots they interpret as the will of God. Whatever is right in the name of common sense and common decency, you may rest assured the Catholics will be against it; and they are a clarion voice in the Fatherland.

For many years the Fatherland, thanks to Jews and Marxists, was in a terrible state—every Czech, Polack, frog, kike, intellectual, wop, Communist, Socialist, Mason, Catholic, and what not spewed his guts out and wiped his feet on the bound and recumbent Gulliver. Hitler soon put a stop to that. He has made Germany the most powerful nation on earth. There's no nation that can defeat her single-handed. And, having power, she is respected and no longer a punching-bag as under the Marxists. Why be intellectual, why be cultural, why be liberal, democratic, fair, when it brings 65,000,000 people nothing but grief, nothing but vassalage to fifth-rate powers, weakness, corruption, and a rot that spreads like wildfire? To us officers of the Reichswehr it is a heartrending spectacle that England, whom we can whip before breakfast, should own and control three-fifths of the globe while we, who have ten times the power, can't even call land we have lived on for thousands of years our own.

There has been a measure of brutality in Germany but not nearly enough to meet the demands of the situation. If anything Adolf has been far, far too lenient. Göring is more my man. I would equip each one of the S. A. with a bungstarter and turn them loose upon the kraut-heads, with instructions to use bungstarters with unprecedented gusto upon their imbecile pates—especially the Catholics. In that way it is barely feasible a soupçon of sense might be drubbed into them. If Adolf sometimes weeps, as they say, it is not to be wondered at, for surely 'tis a case for tears.

SIEGFRIED HETZLER,
German Reichswehr

Milwaukee, Wis., February 25

STRAW VOTES IN A FREE STATE

Dear Sirs: Students of the University of California at Los Angeles held a poll recently to decide whether they favored compulsory military training. On the day scheduled for the vote, February 19, the Los Angeles *Times* carried an editorial on the subject of "Wasting Students' Time." Said the *Times:*

> A singularly useless straw vote on the question of "compulsory military training" in American universities is scheduled to be held today among the students of the University of California at Los Angeles. . . . In no case is it within the province of beneficiaries of free state education to attempt to dictate what shall be included in the curriculum. If the malcontents don't like it they are at complete liberty to go somewhere else. The university would no doubt be glad to be rid of them.

In spite of the fulmination of the *Times* the university students voted decisively against compulsory military training, 2,131 to 951.

It would seem unnecessary to add that the result of the poll was not published in the *Times.*

LOUISE DAVIES

Ventura, Cal., February 25

CONTRIBUTORS

MAURY MAVERICK, fighting Congressman from Texas, lawyer, and business man, is one of the few exponents of liberal opinion in the House. A veteran of the World War, his first-hand knowledge of international conflict undoubtedly added vigor to the courageous battle he made for a strict neutrality program.

LOUIS FISCHER, *The Nation's* Moscow correspondent, has just completed a trip around Europe. His series of articles, Arms Over Europe, of which this is the seventh, has presented the political scene with emphasis on Italy and Germany.

BENJAMIN STOLBERG'S article on Governor Talmadge of Georgia began in last week's *Nation.* Having characterized the South's Barzelius Windrip, he will start work on his study of John L. Lewis.

JAMES T. FARRELL'S most famous work is the "Studs Lonigan" trilogy. His two articles discussing proletarian criticism are part of a book on criticism which is shortly to appear.

FRANK ROBERTSON is the pseudonym of an Akron newspaperman.

LINDSAY ROGERS, lawyer, labor expert, author, editor, has been Burgess Professor of Public Law at Columbia University since 1929.

J. SALWYN SCHAPIRO, professor of history at the College of the City of New York, is author of a biography of Condorcet, the great French liberal. He should be best known to readers of this paper as the author of the longest review that ever appeared in *The Nation,* that of H. G. Wells's "Outline of History" in 1921. The review ran to seven and three-quarter pages.

MARY McCARTHY was coauthor with Margaret Marshall of the highly controversial series in *The Nation* last fall which criticized the critics.

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